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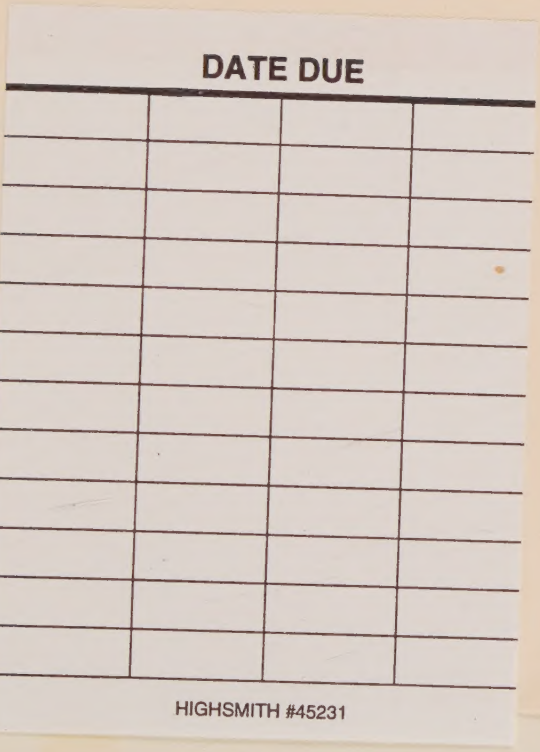

THE ROYAL FAMILY

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THE ROYAL FAMILY

A Comedy in Three Acts

By

George S. Kaufman
an
Edna Ferber

NELSON DOUBLEDAY, INC.
Garden City, New York

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Designed by Ron Lombardi

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The original production of *The Royal Family* opened at the Selwyn Theatre, New York City, on December 28, 1927. It was produced by Jed Harris and staged by David Burton and had the following cast, in order of appearance:

Della	Josephine Williams
Jo	Royal C. Stout
Hallboy	Wally Stuart
McDermott	Murray Alper
Herbert Dean	Orlando Daly
Kitty Dean	Catherine Calhoun-Doucet
Gwen Cavendish	Sylvia Field
Perry Stewart	Roger Pryor
Fanny Cavendish	Haidee Wright
Oscar Wolfe	Jefferson de Angelis
Julie Cavendish	Ann Andrews
Anthony Cavendish	Otto Kruger
Another Hallboy	Lester Nielson
Gilbert Marshall	Joseph King
Gunga	Hubert Courtney
Miss Peake	Phyllis Rose

The American Bicentennial Theatre Production of *The Royal Family* opened at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey on October 27, 1975. After limited engagements at the Eisenhower Theatre, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., and The Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, New York, it opened at the Helen Hayes Theatre in New York City on December 30, 1975.

Produced by Barry M. Brown, Burry Fredrik, Fritz Holt, and Sally Sears

Directed by Ellis Rabb

Scenery by Oliver Smith

Costumes by Ann Roth

Lighting by John Gleason

Original Music Composed by Claibe Richardson

The original cast for The American Bicentennial Theatre Production of *The Royal Family,* in order of appearance:

Della	Rosetta Le Noire
Jo	John Remme
Hallboy	James C. Burge
McDermott	Sherman Lloyd
Herbert Dean	Joseph Maher
Kitty Dean	Mary Louise Wilson
Gwen Cavendish	Mary Layne
Perry Stewart	Forrest Buckman
Fanny Cavendish	Eva Le Gallienne
Oscar Wolfe	Sam Levene
Julie Cavendish	Rosemary Harris
Tony Cavendish	George Grizzard
Chauffeur	Miller Lide
Gilbert Marshall	Donald Barton
Hallboys	Miller Lide and Mark Fleischman
Gunga	James C. Burge
Miss Peake	Margot Stevenson

THE SCENES

The action passes in the duplex apartment
of the Cavendishes, in the East Fifties,
New York.

ACT I

A Friday in November. Early Afternoon.

ACT II

Saturday. Between matinee and night.

ACT III

A year later.

ACT I

The scene is the duplex apartment of the Cavendish family, in the East Fifties, New York. The room is spacious and high-ceilinged—it is really two floors that one sees. At the rear is a balcony from which various doors open into hallways and bedrooms. A curved staircase leads to this balcony. The main room, downstairs, has three doors. One is the outer door, set at a right angle in a kind of recess at the back. Almost hidden under the curve of the stairway is a door that leads to the rear of the apartment—used only by the servants. On the left, the side opposite the outside entrance, is a double door into the library. It is a doorway of majestic height, and when these doors stand open one catches a glimpse of high and endless bookshelves.

The room has about it nothing of the commonplace. At a glance, one sees that it is lived in by an unusual family. It is rich, careless, crowded, comfortable. Almost cluttering it are deep cushioned chairs, little corner clusters of couch, table, lamp; photographs in silver frames are all about; magazines, cushions. A profusion of flowers. Tapestries and rich shawls hang over the balcony railing. A grand piano is partly under the balcony, slightly to the left. A colorful brocade is thrown over this, and a lamp stands on it, together with photographs, etc. All sorts of periods and styles have gone into the making of the room. Prominently placed is a portrait in oils of the late Aubrey Cavendish in his most celebrated role, all bristling mustachios, high stick, romantic cape, glittering orders, gold braid, silk and boots and swagger. The time is about one o'clock of a November afternoon. The Cavendishes, a family of actors, are only now stirring for the day.

At the rise of the curtain the stage is briefly empty. Immediately Della, the maid, comes from one of the bedrooms off

the balcony, a breakfast tray in her hands. She looks a capable person, in the thirties, and intelligent enough to cope with the often surprising situations that arise in the Cavendish household.

She has some difficulty in manipulating both the tray and the door. Finally manages to close the door with her foot. Then she rests the tray on the balcony rail for a moment of readjustment before starting the length of the balcony to descend the stairs. As she starts along the balcony, Jo, the houseman, enters from the servants' entrance downstairs, also carrying a laden tray. He is wearing a white housecoat. He is a man of about forty-eight or fifty.

Jo goes straight toward the stairway and up, passing Della, who is coming down. They pass about a third of the way up. As they are a step or two past each other the telephone on the stage rings. There is a brief glance between them, an unspoken "There's the phone." Della, downward bound, naturally is the one to answer it. She looks about for a convenient place upon which to put her tray. Goes to the telephone.

DELLA:

Hello!

(*The house phone, somewhere in the servants' entrance, rings. Jo is at the top of the stairs. Della looks up at him; motions toward the doorway. Jo looks about in indecision, then puts his tray on the top step and comes hurriedly down. In the meantime Della is speaking on the outside phone.*)

Yes. . . . No, she's not up yet. . . . I say she's not up yet. Well, I don't know. About an hour, maybe.

(*Jo is now at the house phone, unseen. His conversation can be heard running through the rest of Della's talk.*)

JO:	DELLA:
Hello. . . . You can sign	Who is it, please? . . . Mr.

for them. . . . All right, send him up and I'll sign for them.

(*He hangs up.*)

Who? . . . Will you spell that, please? . . . W? . . . Oh, Mr. Wolfe! . . . Yes, Mr. Wolfe? . . .

(*A more personal tone.*)

You know how it is here when the phone starts. . . . Yes, certainly, Mr. Wolfe. I will. All right.

(*Jo, having finished his telephone conversation, has crossed rapidly and is well up the stairs.*)

DELLA:

Who was on the house phone?

JO:

Nothing. Only some flowers.

DELLA:

(*A glance around the flower-laden room.*)

Just what we need.

(*Reaches for the tray. Again the telephone.*)

Hello!

(*The sound of the back-door buzzer.*)

The back door, Jo!

(*Jo disappears into Julie's room.*)

Hello! . . . Yes. . . . Who is it, please? . . . Oh. . . . Yes, she's up, but she can't come to the phone. She's taking her boxing. . . . Yes, I'll take . . . Dinner at Mrs. Sherwin's—

(*Jo appears from Julie's room.*)

Will you wait a minute, please? . . . Jo, that was the back door. Katie'll never answer.

JO:

All right.

(*He comes downstairs. Goes out at the rear.*)

DELLA:

(*Again at the phone.*)

Now what was that again? . . . Dinner at Mrs. Sherwin's, 436 Park Avenue, November 26th, at seven. . . . Seven! I'll tell her, but Miss Cavendish has got to be in the theater before eight—she always eats dinner six-thirty. . . . Yes, I will.

(*Hangs up.*)

(*Jo enters again. In his arms, stacked high and tied together, are pasteboard boxes, very large ones at the bottom, smaller ones at the top. They reach almost to Jo's chin.*)

JO:

Where do you want these?

DELLA:

Who they for? Miss Julie? Take 'em up to her room.

(*Jo goes toward stairs. A hallboy enters behind him, bundle-laden. He pauses just a moment, peers around his stack of boxes to get his bearings.*)

Right on up.

HALLBOY:

There's more out there.

(*Follows Jo up.*)

(*Della goes.*)

(*McDermott, the trainer, comes onto the balcony from Julie's room, whistling. A dapper, slim, quick ferret, with a left cauliflower ear and an amazing co-ordination of muscle. He reeks of the ring. He is wearing a white flannel sleeveless undershirt, trousers, a belt. Has on one boxing mitt, carries the other. He surveys Jo and the hallboy laden with boxes.*)

MCDERMOTT:

Somebody moving in?

JO:

One side! Heads up!

McDERMOTT:

G'wan!

(*Della comes on again, carrying additional boxes.*)

Je's!

(*Jo goes into Julie's room. The hallboy still ascending the stairs. The doorbell rings. Della has an instant of indecision. Puts down her boxes. Starts for door. Telephone rings. Della goes toward it. Changes her mind, continues to door. Telephone continues. McDermott comes down, is met about one third of the way up by the hallboy; solves the traffic problem by leaping lightly over the railing. Jo reappears on balcony. Comes down.*)

DELLA:

Jo, answer the telphone.

JO:

Let it ring!

McDERMOTT:

(*To Della.*)
Seen Miss Julie's mitts?

DELLA:

In the liberry.

McDERMOTT:

Where?

MESSENGER:

(*Voice off. Very loud.*)
Telegram for Cavendish!

JO:

(*Picking up Della's pile of boxes.*)
Only ring again if I do answer it.

(*Starts for the stairs.*)

McDERMOTT:

Where'd you say?

(*Della back from the door, with telegram and receipt pad in hand.*)

DELLA:

In the liberry. Jo, you got a pencil?

(*McDermott goes into the library.*)

JO:

(*Over the top of his boxes.*)

Have I got a pencil!

(*Hallboy out of Julie's room. Down stairs.*)

DELLA:

Well, I can't . . . Oh, for heaven's sake!

(*In phone.*)

Will you hold the line a minute?

(*To hallboy.*)

Boy, can you sign for this and give it to that messenger?

(*Hallboy takes pad, goes to outer door.*)

Hello! . . . Miss Julie Cavendish? . . . Well, she can't just now.

McDERMOTT:

(*Enters from library, whistling.*)

I found 'em!

DELLA:

Oh, I should think in about an hour.

McDERMOTT:

I bet Jo was using them.

(*Jo enters from Julie's room. Starts down. He carries a pair of women's shoes.*)

DELLA:

All right. I'll tell her.

(*Hangs up. The back-door buzzer sounds.*)

What's that?

JO:

I guess it's those flowers.

DELLA:

I'll go. Here, you take this up to her.

(*Hands him telegram.*)

Give me those.

(*Takes shoes.*)

(*McDermott has taken off his gloves, put on the other pair. Tucks original gloves under his arm.*)

(*Back-door buzzer sounds again.*)

DELLA:

Oh, all right, all right!

(*She goes.*)

JO:

(*Looks forward to a little talk with McDermott.*)

How's the battler, huh? Pretty good?

MCDERMOTT:

Say, I feel like I could take on the Woolworth Building!

(*A few swift passes at Jo with his gloved hands.*)

A little boxing wouldn't hurt you none. You got flat feet carrying trays. And look at that!

(*Taps Jo's stomach.*)

What do you eat for breakfast! Ostrich eggs!

JO:

Say! Any fellow goes around boxing women for a living I guess I could take 'em on.

McDERMOTT:

Yeah! I've taken on some of the best in the world in my time.

JO:

I know your record. You was known as Canvasback McDermott.

(*Sweeps the floor with a gesture of his palm.*)

You're right in your class now, all right. Running a gymnasium racket, hiring out as a punching bag for women to keep their figures.

McDERMOTT:

All right, and let me tell you something. I got women clients could make a jelly out of you, and what do you know about that!

JO:

Yeah!

McDERMOTT:

Yeah.

(*Points vaguely up the stairs.*)

She gave me a poke yesterday would have held you for the count.

JO:

I'd like to see her try it.

McDERMOTT:

I trained a lot of stage people, but I never seen anybody pick it up quicker than Miss Cavendish.

JO:

Say, acting ain't all they can do. Look at Tony.

McDERMOTT:

I seen him in pictures.

JO:

Act, play the piano, fiddle, fence, box. I bet the old lady herself could take you on. Say, I been here upwards of ten years, and—

(*The outer doorbell rings. Jo starts toward it, still talking.*)

—and nothing they could do—

(*Remembers telegram. Gives it to McDermott.*)

Here! Take that, will you? You're going up to Miss Julie's room. . . .

(*McDermott is on his way up the stairs.*)

Say, do you think you could get me into the Garden Friday night? I've never seen this Delaney.

McDERMOTT:

Sure. Just mention my name.

(*Takes the last few steps in a great leap. Disappears.*)

(*Jo opens the outer door. The well-rounded tones of Herbert Dean are heard in greeting.*)

DEAN:

Ah, good morning, Jo, my boy! Good morning!

JO:

Good morning, Mr. Dean.

(*Dean strides into the room. Jo shuts outer door and follows.*)

(*Dean is about fifty-seven, very dressy, an excellent actor beginning to show his age. The flower of the Lamb's Club. Necktie, shirt and handkerchief always blend. Massage has been his most active form of exercise. His appearance inevitably brings to mind the adjective "well-preserved." Clothes a shade too well tailored. His topcoat is one of those which define waistline. His walking stick is London. Under his*

arm is a play manuscript. His entrance is a characteristic one, done in state. That springy walk. He makes straight for the center of the room and stands viewing himself in the mirror.)

DEAN:

Well, well, well! Where's the family! Where's everybody!
(*Drops script on table.*)

JO:

They're not down, Mr. Dean. It's hardly half past one yet.

DEAN:

(*Removes coat.*)
I was up a full hour ago. Setting-up exercises! Cold bath!

JO:

Yessir! You always took care yourself. That's how you kept your figger.

DEAN:

Not bad, is it— For a chap of—uh—forty-five?

JO:

Forty-five, sir! Oh, my no!

DEAN:

Well, look here. They're all awake, aren't they? Miss Julie's awake?

JO:

Oh, yes. Her and the trainer been exercising half an hour and more. She ought to be down any minute now.

DEAN:

I see. I see. I want very much to talk to her before we're interrupted. How about my sister? She up?

(*A glance to balcony bedroom door. Jo is in alcove, hanging coat, etc., in closet.*)

JO:

She's been stirring quite a while. Doesn't sleep so well lately, Mrs. Cavendish doesn't. Wide awake at eleven every morning.

DEAN:

(*Dean has noticed the breakfast tray and drifts toward it, talking as he walks, but intent on the tray.*)

Well, of course she's getting along in years.

(*Feels the coffeepot to learn if it's hot. Dreamily picks up a breakfast roll. Butters it.*)

Trouble is she won't give in. Pretends she's well.

(*Two long and determined peals of the doorbell. An apprehensive look in Dean's face. Jo opens outer door to admit Kitty LeMoyne Dean.*)

JO:

Good morning, Mrs. Dean!

(*Kitty enters, ignoring Jo's greeting. About forty-eight, but doesn't believe it. An actress for many years, never more than mediocre. She is obviously in a temper. Comes directly over to Dean. Him she stands regarding with a baleful eye. They stare at each other. Dean turns away with a snort.*)

(*Jo, coming down, is in a genial mood and essays a pleasantry.*)

That's funny. You getting here just a minute after Mr. Dean. He just got here a minute ago himself.

(*He looks expectantly from one to the other for appreciation of this coincidence. Something in their faces tells him that things are not so jolly.*)

Well, I'll tell Miss Julie you're both down here.

(*He retreats, somewhat gingerly. Della enters breezily. She is carrying an open box of flowers so that the mass of blooms is plainly to be seen.*)

DELLA:

Good morning, Mrs. Dean! Mr. Dean! You two are out bright and early!

JO:

Psst!

(*A bit of warning pantomine from Jo to Della. Della gives Jo an uncomprehending look.*)

DELLA:

H'm?

(*Della over to Kitty with box of flowers.*)

Did you ever see these kind of roses? I've forgotten what you call them.

(*Kitty barely glances at the box. A movement of the lips that is a frigid imitation of a smiling assent.*)

Well, I guess I'll take them up and show them to her.

(*She goes upstairs.*)

(*Jo picks up the tray that Della brought down earlier. Starts off with it.*)

DEAN:

Heh! Here, here!

(*Dashes to tray. Snatches another roll.*)

JO:

Why, you're hungry, sir! Won't you let me bring you a bite of breakfast!

DEAN:

No, no, no, no! . . . I'll tell you what. You might bring me a cup of coffee.

JO:

Yessir! I'll have it made fresh for you.

DEAN:

Thanks, Jo. I wasn't permitted to finish my breakfast this morning, what with one thing and another.

(*With a meaning glare at Kitty.*)

JO:

Yes, sir!

(*A backward look around the edge of the upraised tray that inquires as to Kitty's possible need of refreshment.*)

Perhaps—uh—

(*Kitty's stony look defeats him. Jo goes.*)

(*Kitty and Dean are alone. Dean takes a vicious and defensive bite of roll.*)

KITTY:

And furthermore, Herbert Dean, if you think you can shut me up by sneaking off to this family of yours—

DEAN:

Sneaking, my good woman! I believe I am privileged to walk out of my own home and call on my niece and my sister without asking your formal permission.

KITTY:

If you think I'm going to stand by and see another woman play that part—

(*Simultaneous.*)

KITTY:

—you're mighty mistaken, that's all I can say! If you think you're going to do that

DEAN:

For Heaven's sake, Kitty, now let me alone on that, will you! It's not your kind of part,

KITTY:

play without me being in it you've got a lot to learn! That part was made for me! I'd be marvelous in it! And if you imagine for one minute, Herbert Dean—

DEAN:

I tell you! You'd be all wrong in it! I've been waiting ten years to get a play like this—

(*The script has been lying on the table. He picks it up for emphasis as he speaks.*)

but I tell you it isn't for you! It's—

(*Both stop at the sound of a door opening on the balcony. They glance up. Della appears. Dean throws the manuscript back on the table with a slam and turns away. Della comes down. She has just gone out at right and Kitty has taken breath for a renewal of the attack when the phone rings. Della returns.*)

DELLA:

Hello! . . . Yes . . . Mr. Anthony Cavendish? Oh, no, Mr. Anthony Cavendish is not here. . . . Yes, he lives here when he's home, but he's in Hollywood. . . . I don't believe he's expected.

(*Aside to Dean.*)

Is Mr. Tony expected?

(*A shrug only from Dean.*)

DELLA:

No, he isn't expected. . . . Who is it, please? . . . *The Graphic?* Oh, yes.

DEAN:

(*A warning whisper.*)

You don't know anything!

DELLA:

(*In phone.*)

I don't know anything.

(*Hangs up.*)

DEAN:

What did they want?

DELLA:

Said Mr. Tony. I told them he was in Hollywood.

DEAN:

The Graphic? What's that young devil up to now?

KITTY:

A Cavendish can do no wrong.

DELLA:

I told Miss Julie you wanted to see her in a hurry.

(*Della goes.*)

KITTY:

In a hurry, h'm? Before I could get here!

DEAN:

Now, Kitty, let's not go all over this again. Look at me! I'm all unstrung. I've had no sleep.

KITTY:

You had as much sleep as I had.

DEAN:

Whose fault was it! Let me tell you, madam, one more night like that and I move to the Lamb's Club.

KITTY:

Move! Where do you think you live now!

DEAN:

(*Picks up script.*)
I won't have any more talk about it.

KITTY:

No, I'm not allowed to say a word. But you send a script over for Julie to read last night—Julie and that sister of yours.

DEAN:

And why shouldn't they read it! I never have done a play without consulting Fanny and Julie.

KITTY:

Maybe that's why you never have a hit.

DEAN:

I'll have one this time! I can see myself in every line of it, every gesture! Take the Nero scene!

(*A pose.*)
The Abraham Lincoln scene! As Frederick the Great! But you, my dear Kitty—the woman who plays this part must be— You see, your technique is more—uh—mellow—

KITTY:

Are you by any chance telling me that I'm too old!

DEAN:

Oh, my dear Kitty!

KITTY:

Then I suppose I'm not a good enough actress! I was good enough to support Mansfield, though, wasn't I!

DEAN:

Plenty!

KITTY:

I'm as good an actress as your precious Julie, even if she is a Cavendish. And I'm better than that sister of yours ever was.

DEAN:

My dear Kitty, please do not embarrass me by comparing yourself with Julie Cavendish, or with her mother, the greatest Lady Macbeth of her day.

KITTY:

Oh, for— Listen! There are a few actresses whose name isn't Cavendish. Cavendish! Cavendish! I've had the royal family Cavendished up to me for twelve years. God, but I'm sick of them!

DEAN:

You are sick of the Cavendishes! You are—the most distinguished . . . And who are you, I'd like to know, to be sick of the Cavendishes! What were you when I married you!

KITTY:

I was understudying Mannering in *The Garden of Allah.*

DEAN:

You were an off-stage noise!

(*Jo enters with Dean's tray. Slight pause on threshold to make certain battle is not too thick.*)

JO:

Here you are, Mr. Dean. Nice hot pot of coffee, pick you up right away.

(*Puts tray on table. Draws up chair for Dean.*)

DEAN:

Thanks, Jo, thanks. Coffee! That's fine!

JO:

Hot buttered toast.

(*Lifts a napkin.*)

KITTY:

Oh, Jo!

(*Jo pauses.*)

I feel a little faint.

(*An eye on the tray.*)

Perhaps if I forced myself to swallow a mouthful of coffee—

JO:

Right away, Mrs. Dean. And a little toast?

KITTY:

The tiniest sliver. . . . Or perhaps I ought to try to eat an egg.

JO:

I'd try, yes, ma'am. Soft-boiled?

KITTY:

I think—shirred. With just a thin curl of bacon.

JO:

Thin curl of bacon. Yes'm.

(*Turns to go.*)

DEAN:

I—uh—h'm—I might have an egg, Jo, while you're about it.

JO:

Yes, sir. Same as Mrs. Dean's?

(*The sound of the outer door closing.*)

DEAN:

Why—ah—

(*Gwen enters from outer door. She is in riding clothes; a slim, lovely young thing of nineteen. She is, perhaps, less a Cavendish than any of the others of the family. Perry Stewart enters behind her and lingers a moment uncertainly in the doorway.*

Perry Stewart is a personable young fellow of about twenty-eight. Piping Rocking, Long Island, bonds. He is wearing an overcoat. His driving gloves are rather indicative of the Minerva at the curb.)

GWEN:

M-m-m! Jo, I've got to have some lunch.

(*To the Deans.*)

Hello! . . . Want some lunch, Perry?

DEAN:

Lunch!

PERRY:

Not a chance! If I'm going to dress and get back here I've got to blow.

GWEN:

This is Perry Stewart. Oh, I guess you've met. My uncle—and Aunt Kitty.

(*They exchange greetings.*)

KITTY:

Been riding?

GWEN:

Mm. It was marvelous. The ground was white with frost.

DEAN:

I never cared much for Nature.

GWEN:

Jo, what've you got to eat? . . . What's the matter, Kitty? Don't you like frosty mornings, either?

KITTY:

I've just had one.

PERRY:

Look here, don't you waste a lot of time on lunch.

(*Looks at wrist watch.*)

I'll be back here at half past two, and you're going to be ready.

GWEN:

Very well, m'lord.

PERRY:

No fooling, Gwen. It's an hour's drive, and a guest of honor has got to be on time.

GWEN:

That sounds scary.

PERRY:

Well—you know—one thing she's fussy about is people being on time.

GWEN:

I'll be sitting on the curb.

PERRY:

She thinks actresses are temperamental or something. So let's show her.

(*To Dean and Kitty.*)

Good-by.

(*They say good-by.*)

GWEN:

Good-by, Perry!

(*Perry goes. Gwen follows him a step or two into the alcove.*)

JO:

(*To Dean.*)

You said the same as Mrs. Dean's, sir? The eggs?

DEAN:

Oh. Yes. A little bacon—chicken livers—anything.

GWEN:

What've you got for me, Jo? Cold meat, or a chop—I don't care so long as it's food.

JO:

Yes, Miss Gwen.

(*Jo goes.*)

GWEN:

Gosh, I'm hungry! I was up at half past seven.

DEAN:

Half past what!

KITTY:

I think he's awfully good-looking, Gwen.

GWEN:

I'll tell him.

KITTY:

What's the function this afternoon? It sounds formal.

GWEN:

Oh, no. Perry's mother's giving a tea for me up in Scarsdale, that's all.

(*Is going up the stairs.*)

DEAN:

Uh—Gwen. You might remind your mother that I am waiting. And also your grandmother.

GWEN:

Sure.

KITTY:

Incidentally, so am I.

DEAN:

No more morning rides after this week, eh, Gwen, my child? Rehearsals. Rehearsals.

GWEN:

I'm afraid so.

DEAN:

You ought to be very proud, my dear. At your age, to be appearing with your mother. Quite an event! Quite an event in the theater!

(*Toast and napkin in hand, he gives the effect of a speech as his mood gains in warmth and splendor.*)

Yes, sir! About to enter into your great inheritance! To come before the public as the descendant of a distinguished family! It is not a trust to be taken lightly, my dear. Remember that not only will all of us be watching you, but your gifted ancestors as well.

(*A heavy "Ahem!" here.*)

(*Gwen has lingered politely near the top of the stairs. Fanny Cavendish's door opens and she enters quickly from the balcony. She speaks simultaneously with the opening of the door.*)

FANNY:

I think that speech needs cutting, Bertie.

(*Fanny Cavendish is seventy-two. Managerial, pungent, rather magnificent. Given to domineering and to reminiscence. Her clothes are rich but careless, and somewhat outdated.*)

GWEN:

(*Runs up the remaining stairs. Kisses Fanny's cheek lightly.*)
How are you, baby? Feeling all right?

FANNY:

Splendid. . . . Have a nice ride?

GWEN:

Glorious! The sun over the—

FANNY:

Spare me.

(*Gwen goes. Fanny starts downstairs. She walks with a cane.*)

Yes, Bertie, they'd be up the aisles and out before you'd really got your teeth into it.

(*Is descending stairs.*)

Isn't that hat a little ingenue, Kitty?

DEAN:

How are you this morning, Fanny? What did the new doctor say? Anything?

FANNY:

What do they know? Parcel of fools!

(*Descends the last step.*)

Well, what brings you two lovebirds around at the break of day?

KITTY:

Bert is calling one of his family conclaves.

DEAN:

I'm here to see Julie, that's all.

FANNY:

(*Easing herself into her chair.*)

Family conclave, eh? Sounds very repulsive.

(*Dean attempts to assist her.*)

It's all right. Don't fuss, Bertie. I'm not helpless.

(*Sits.*)

Julie not down yet, eh?

DEAN:

She is not. I've been waiting half an hour.

FANNY:

That prize fighter's here, I guess. Boxing! Time I was Julie's age I didn't have to box to keep my figger. You could span my waist with your two hands.

KITTY:

I like a nice womanly figure myself.

FANNY:

You ought to be very happy.

DEAN:

(*A pat on the shoulder.*)
Well, Fanny, you certainly don't seem an invalid. You're looking splendid.

FANNY:

Invalid? Well as I ever was. I'm going into rehearsal as soon as Wolfe can pick a cast.

DEAN:

Now, now, Fanny. You've had a long siege of it. After a year's illness—

KITTY:

Nearer two, isn't it?

FANNY:

And what if it is! Two years out of a lifetime! I played fifty-three years without missing a performance, except when Tony was born.

KITTY:

And surely when Julie was born!

FANNY:

Not Julie! She knows her business better than that. Julie was born during Holy Week.

DEAN:

But look here now, Fanny. What are you going to do? You haven't a new play, have you?

FANNY:

Who said anything about a new play! I'm reviving *Mrs. Castlemaine.*

DEAN:

But that's rather old-fashioned, Fanny. New York won't come to see that, even with you in it.

FANNY:

New York! You talk like a Follies girl! I'm going to take it on the road.

DEAN:

The road? You're mad.

FANNY:

I know your views, Bertie. You think Albany is somewhere in the Antipodes.

DEAN:

I don't belittle the road. It's quite all right in its way. But my public is in New York.

KITTY:

Or was, when last heard from.

FANNY:

Well, I'm not like you, Bertie. I've been a trouper all my life, and I'm going to keep on trouping. I'd rather pack 'em into a tent in Texas than play highbrow matinees every Tuesday and Friday at the Teacup Theatre in New York.

DEAN:

But you've been ill, Fanny. You can't stand what you used to. Those dreadful small-town hotels! Sleeping in Pullmans!

FANNY:

I did it when there weren't any Pullmans! When many a time I had to sit up all night—yes, with Julie asleep on one side and Tony generally yelling his head off on the other.

DEAN:

But that belongs to the past, Fanny. You're too important a figure today.

FANNY:

(*In spite of her infirmity rises to her feet.*)
I was Fanny Cavendish then, just as I am now. When the bills said Aubrey and Fanny Cavendish people knew what they were going to see. You had to know how to act—
(*A slow turn toward Kitty.*)
—when you went on the stage in those days.

KITTY:

You had your method. We of the younger school have ours.

FANNY:

Ah, youth, youth!

DEAN:

(*In the manner of a formal announcement.*)
If you do go back this season, Fanny, that's going to mean the whole family on the boards.

FANNY:

The whole family?

DEAN:

Except Tony, of course. You can't call pictures acting. But with you in *Castlemaine,* Julie and Gwen in their play, and—
(*A triumphant reach for the manuscript on the table. The doorbell rings.*)
your humble servant as the star of—

FANNY:

(*In a surprising shout.*)
Della! Della!

(*Turns to Dean again.*)
What's that about your being the bright particular star?

DEAN:

I sent the manuscript of my next play over to Julie last night.

FANNY:

I know it.
(*Della enters. Goes to outer door.*)

DEAN:

Have you read it?

FANNY:

Only the first ten scenes.
(*Jo enters with Kitty's tray.*)

DEAN:

Well?

FANNY:

I was afraid to read the second act for fear you played two parts at once.

DELLA:

(*At door.*)
Good morning, Mr. Wolfe.

WOLFE:

(*Off.*)
Morning, my girl. Good morning.

JO:

(*Speaks through others.*)
Here you are, Mrs. Dean. All nice and hot.

KITTY:

(*Tragically.*)
Oh—food!

(*The thought palpably repels her, though she begins to eat. Jo places tray left center. One dish Jo transfers to Dean's tray.*)

(*Oscar Wolfe enters, followed by Della, who waits. Wolfe is a figure of authority; dark, stocky, slightly gray, dressed with a picturesque richness. A rakish black velour hat. Altogether the entrepreneur.*)

WOLFE:

Well, well! Good morning, show folks! Hello, Bert!

DEAN:

Ah, Oscar! Just the man I want to see.

WOLFE:

(*Shakes a chiding finger.*)
Calories, Kitty! Calories!

KITTY:

(*Her mouth full.*)
I didn't have a bite of breakfast.

WOLFE:

Fanny, my girl, how are you!

(*Takes her hand, pats it warmly.*)

FANNY:

What brings you around this hour?

WOLFE:

What draws me here always but the one great passion of my life! You, my dear Fanny!

FANNY:

(*With insistence.*)
What are you here for?
(*Wolfe removes coat. Jo takes it, also hat and stick.*)

WOLFE:

The heartlessness of this coquette! The best years of my life I've given her.

DEAN:

Ah—Oscar—just—

WOLFE:

(*Not heeding Dean. To Fanny.*)
Where's your gifted daughter?

FANNY:

I thought so . . . Della, tell Julie.
(*Gwen appears on the balcony. Della goes upstairs.*)

GWEN:

My lunch ready? I'm dying.
(*Wears silk riding shirt, breeches, mules and gay bathrobe.*)

JO:

I'll bring it right in.

(*Goes.*)

WOLFE:

Hello there, young lady! How's the child actress!

GWEN:

Well, if it isn't Oscar himself! Here at the first pale crack of dawn!

WOLFE:

Crack of dawn, huh? Say, you good-for-nothing actors can sleep till noon. You know your poor old manager's done a day's work for you already. That's quite a costume! What are you supposed to represent?

GWEN:

(*Jo enters with Gwen's tray.*)
I'm the Spirit of Quick Lunch. . . . Bring it over here, Jo. Don't you want something, Mr. Wolfe? H'm? Haunch of venison or a couple of bear steaks?

FANNY:

Jo! Time for my eggnog, isn't it?

JO:

Yes, Mrs. Cavendish. They're beating it up.

WOLFE:

(*A slow, inclusive look around that takes in the three trays.*)
Don't you ever get mixed up Jo, about who wants breakfast and who wants lunch?

JO:

Yes, sir, certainly do, Mr. Wolfe. Still, you get used to it.

WOLFE:

Say, do you people realize that there actually are families in this town that sit down in a dining room all at the same time and eat a meal! Together!

FANNY:

Quaint!

GWEN:

I think it would be nice.

JO:

Sure you wouldn't care for anything, Mr. Wolfe? Glad to get it for you.

WOLFE:

No, not me, thanks, Jo. Lunch is a meal I never eat.

(*Jo goes again.*)

FANNY:

No. Just a little thick soup, and a mixed grill and coffee and French pastry at the Astor.

WOLFE:

You're your old self this morning, Fanny.

FANNY:

My old self, Wolfe, and ready to go back to work.

(*A quick movement from Dean. He wants to speak of himself.*)

WOLFE:

Now, now, Fanny! Not so fast!

FANNY:

Don't you now-now-Fanny me! I know whether I'm well or not. You haven't time for anything nowadays but Julie and Gwen.

DEAN:

(*Manuscript in hand, taps Wolfe on the shoulder.*)

Oscar, I tried to reach you all day yesterday—

WOLFE:

Yesterday? A crazy day. This is the last theater I'll ever build. Contractors, plasterers, license commissioners!—Where the devil is Julie? She can't stay in bed *all* day.

(*Up at balcony.*)

Julie!

FANNY:

Julie!

(*A shout that tops Wolfe's.*)

JULIE:

(*A voice from behind the bedroom door, balcony.*)
I'm busy.

FANNY:

Wolfe is here!

JULIE:

Give him my love!

WOLFE:

I'm in a hurry!

(*Nothing from the upper regions. A moment's expectant pause. Wolfe turns away with an impatient shrug.*)

DEAN:

Well, Oscar—I have finally found the play!

(*Jo enters with eggnog; crosses to Fanny.*)

WOLFE:

All right, all right. Later on.

(*A hand on Dean's shoulder.*)

You're a fine actor, Bert, but remember that last opus you

handed me. . . . Well, well! What you got there, Fanny? Something good?

FANNY:

Eggnog. I'm being built up.

WOLFE:

Got a little schnapps in it, huh?

FANNY:

Milk and eggs.

WOLFE:

Say, to do you good it's got to have something in it. Let me send you a few bottles sherry tomorrow.

(*Scribbles hastily in a little notebook taken from his pocket. As he writes.*)

I got some fine Amontillado over at the office.

FANNY:

That'll help.

DEAN:

Now, Wolfe.

(*Slips the manuscript under Wolfe's arm.*)

There's the script.

(*Della comes onto the balcony from Julie's room, a great pile of garments in her arms, so stacked that she scarcely can see over them. Down the stairs and goes out.*)

WOLFE:

All right.

(*Up toward the piano. Tosses manuscript on piano.*)

I'll keep it in mind.

(*Strikes a note or two, idly.*)

DEAN:

What a play! Richness, characterization, verisimilitude!

WOLFE:

M-m-m-m! . . . I read it anyhow.

(*A bar or two of music.*)

That other piano as bad as this?

DEAN:

I'll drop in on you first thing in the morning. Hear what you think.

(*He goes back to his tray.*)

(*Kitty, too, returns to her tray.*)

(*Wolfe, becoming more interested in the music, runs another bar or two. Then he sits and concentrates a bit more on a few notes, preparatory to playing the thing he has in mind.*)

FANNY:

What's the name of it again, Bertie? This masterpiece.

DEAN:

The Conqueror.

(*Another brief run on the piano from Wolfe.*)

FANNY:

Are you going to do it soon?

DEAN:

Oh, around the holidays, if that suits Oscar.

(*A glance toward Wolfe. Wolfe now is playing, lightly, a melodious, slightly sentimental air that continues for a few bars without interruption.*)

GWEN:

(*During a moment's lull in the music.*)
What's that?

WOLFE:

I don't know. They were playing it in Vienna.
(*For a moment they give an ear to the music. Jo comes to Fanny with a plate of rolls. Fanny refuses. While the music is still playing, Jo crosses to Kitty, offers her the rolls. They have all resumed eating. Their attention is fixed on the food before them. A brief lull. The music softly continues. The tinkle of silverware and the clatter of china is distinctly heard.*)
(*The door of Julie's bedroom opens slowly. Julie appears, balcony. Julie Cavendish is thirty-nine, beautiful, slim, mature. She is wearing a smart, rather tailored afternoon gown. Is evidently dressed for the day. She comes out slowly, curious to know who is playing. She crosses the width of the balcony, stands at the railing, looking down. Her first glance is toward the piano. She sees Wolfe there. Her gaze encompasses the rest of the room. Four of its occupants are busily eating. One at a time, she takes them in.*)

JULIE:

Have you a table for one, Jo, not too near the music?
(*Wolfe stops playing. Turns quickly to look up at Julie. Dean also looks up at her; and Kitty.*)

WOLFE:

How do you ever make it on matinee days, Julie?

JULIE:

(*Starts toward stairway.*)
By being the star, Oscar. They wait for me.

KITTY:

I was on the point of departure.

JULIE:

Oh, please! Try some of the broccoli hollandaise. It's very nice this morning.

(*She is leaning over the stairway rail, one hand posed just a little too carefully on the banister.*)

Or filet of sole Marguery.

FANNY:

A very good entrance, Julie.

JULIE:

Dear little mother! Wouldn't you like to go up and come down again?

(*Comes on down. Jo picks up Gwen's tray. Goes out with it. Gwen rises from her table, a bit of food in her hand, munching as she goes. She meets Julie at the foot of the stairway.*)

Have a nice ride, Gwen?

(*A glance at her.*)

Don't you look terrible!

(*Della enters, carrying a gay orange and purple figured box.*)

GWEN:

I know it, Mother. I'm going right up and change.

JULIE:

No. Wait a minute.

(*Flicks open the telegram in her hand, holds it out.*)

For lo, I bring tidings! Guess what!

FANNY:

Tidings?

GWEN:

Well?

DEAN:

What?

DELLA:

(*Indicates hat box.*)
A C.O.D. package, Miss Julie. Thirty-nine dollars.

JULIE:

What?

DELLA:

Thirty-nine dollars. A package.

JULIE:

Thirty-nine dol—what did I buy for thir—such a strange sum. Who has thirty-nine dollars?

(*Surveys the group rapidly.*)

Oscar! Let her have it, will you? That makes—how much do I owe you now?

WOLFE:

Enough.

(*McDermott appears from center door, balcony. He wears coat, small black derby; little black bag in his hand. Starts down.*)

GWEN:

Mother, I can't wait. You haven't any news, anyhow.

JULIE:

Oh, but I have, Gwen, so come right back here.

(*Glimpses McDermott coming swiftly down the stairs.*)

I'll want you tomorrow, you know, Mac.

McDERMOTT:

(*Shifts his hat slightly by way of deference.*)
Yes, Miss Cavendish, we'll have a real workout tomorrow. Same time?

JULIE:

No, come at eleven— No—Bendel! Ten? . . . Oh, my God, no! . . . Twelve . . . one . . . one, Mac.

FANNY:

Matinee tomorrow.

JULIE:

Oh, good Lord, I can't make it tomorrow at all, Mac . . . Monday.

WOLFE:

Watch out there! You got rehearsals starting Monday!

JULIE:

Wait a minute, Mac. So I have. Let me think . . . could you give me Sunday?

McDERMOTT:

I don't generally work Sundays as a rule. But seeing it's you. One o'clock?

JULIE:

One's fine. You're a dear.

McDERMOTT:

So long!

(*McDermott starts to go.*)

JULIE:

Good Lord! Mac! I can't Sunday. Make it tomorrow at twelve. I'll get it in some way!

McDERMOTT:

Yes, ma'am.

(*Leaves.*)

JULIE:

Special fitting on Sunday, and it make take hours. Oscar, her second-act dress is going to be lovely. Cloth of gold, encrusted with turquoise. And of course the sable wrap will make it perfect.

WOLFE:

Sable wrap?

JULIE:

Why, of course. For the opera scene. She has to have a sable wrap.

FANNY:

Wouldn't surprise me if the whole cast wore 'em. My day it was Fanny Cavendish's costumes by Fanny Cavendish. With one little dress and a guipure lace flounce I could be anything from Camille to The Two Orphans.

JULIE:

I've seen that one little dress in the storehouse. The investment for whalebone and buckram alone would have kept me in sables a lifetime.

FANNY:

A dress was a dress those days, and not a chemise.

GWEN:

Mother, are you going to read that telegram or aren't you? Perry'll be here in ten minutes.

WOLFE:

First let me tell you what I came about. Then I get right out.
(*A sigh of impatience from Gwen.*)

JULIE:

No, no! You've got to hear this. We need you.

GWEN:

Well then, come on with it!

FANNY:

Yes, Julie, I think you've built up a good suspense.

JULIE:

(*Surveys her position.*)
Am I center? . . . It's dear little brother Tony again.

FANNY:

Tony!

DEAN:

I knew it.

WOLFE:

What's he done now, that bum?

KITTY:

Plenty, is my guess.

JULIE:

Well, his telegram is rather sketchy, but as nearly as I can make out, I gather that he's killed somebody.

FANNY:

Anyone we know?

JULIE:

(*Reads.*)

"Pay no attention to possible accounts of Deming incident injuries not fatal takes more than that to kill a lousy movie director I arrive New York Saturday California police have no authority outside state on no condition talk to reporters Zeta Zaydak on this train but no trouble so far as am locked in drawing room love to all of you he was dirty hound anyway. Tony." Good old Tony.

(*There is a moment's complete silence following the reading of this.*)

KITTY:

What did I tell you!

JULIE:

It lacks a certain clarity, doesn't it?

FANNY:

California police!

DEAN:

What's this, what's this!

(*There now ensues a babel of sound—exclamations, conjectures, questions. What's it mean? You know Tony. What's it all about? Who's Zeta Zaydak? Read that again.*)

WOLFE:

(*Comes over to Julie.*)

Let me have that, Julie. Now, just a minute, people. Let's get at this. This may not be so funny.

FANNY:

Do you think it's serious?

JULIE:

Of course not, Mother. It never is.

WOLFE:

(*Rereading fragments of the telegram to himself, but aloud.*)
Possible accounts of Deming incident—

GWEN:

Deming is his director.

WOLFE:

Arrive New York Saturday.

DEAN:

That's tomorrow.

WOLFE:

. . . Zeta Zaydak on this train . . .

KITTY:

She's that Polish hussy.

WOLFE:

A fine business.

FANNY:

What's she on the train for?

WOLFE:

On no condition talk to reporters. . . .

JULIE:

Have there been any reporters?

DEAN:

Before you were down. *The Graphic!*

JULIE:

The Graphic! Whatever we've done, we've always kept out of the tabloids.

WOLFE:

Who's kept you out, I'd like to know! Wolfe! If it wasn't for me they'd have been running long ago a contest Which Is the Craziest Cavendish.

JULIE:

Here's another chance for you. What are we going to do?

WOLFE:

Now, wait a minute. Let's look this over. Maybe it's not as bad as it seems.

FANNY:

No.

GWEN:

Of course not, Grandma. Such a fuss because Tony's punched some director. I'm sure to be late.

(*On her way up the stairs. Escapes.*)

WOLFE:

(*Still concentrating on the telegram.*)

Now the way I figure it, it was like this. The fella says something Tony doesn't like. Tony knocks him down, of course. And to keep from having to answer a lot of questions about it, he gets on this train.

JULIE:

With the picture half finished, naturally.

WOLFE:

Omaha he sent this from. Omaha last night. That means he got to Chicago this morning. Naturally he got on the Century. Tomorrow morning you'll be just one happy family.

JULIE:

We've got to keep the newspapers off him. You know Tony and the papers. They've been laying for him ever since that *Mauretania* thing.

KITTY:

I must say I don't blame them.

DEAN:

Yes, he never should have thrown that reporter overboard.

WOLFE:

A big mistake.

JULIE:

We musn't let them get at him this time. They're sure to know he's on the Century. They'll swarm on him at the station. He'll start to smash cameras.

(*A gesture that says "Whoop!"*)

FANNY:

That poor boy.

WOLFE:

(*Snaps his fingers.*)
I tell you how I fix it. He don't come into Grand Central. He gets off at 125th Street.

JULIE:

It doesn't stop there.

WOLFE:

Tomorrow it will—for one second.
(*Points wisely to himself.*)
I get him off the train, I bring him here before the newspapers know it, he stays quiet a couple of weeks. If they find it out, he's having a nervous collapse—and nobody can see him.

JULIE:

Oh, Oscar! That'll be wonderful! There you are, Mrs. C. Everything's grand.

FANNY:

Everything grand! Who's this Zany woman! What's she doing on the train!

JULIE:

Well—uh—Oscar, tell mother the facts of life.

WOLFE:

(*Pats Fanny's shoulder.*)
Satisfied, Fanny? Huh? Your boy ain't in danger?

FANNY:

You're the manager.

WOLFE:

Good! Now! If nobody else has got anything to do, that you would like to have me wait until you do it—Julie, you don't want

to take a massage first, or something? . . . No? . . . Well, then, do you mind if I waste just a minute of your time on my business!

DEAN:

That's what I say! After all, we—

WOLFE:

No, no, no, no, no! This is Julie. Julie, my girl, it is now—
(*His watch.*)
. . . My God! Five minutes after two! I want you downtown in my office—you and Gwen—three o'clock, sharp.

JULIE:

Downtown! What for?

WOLFE:

Now, don't start to holler before I tell you. I'm not so stuck on it, either, but we've all got to do it.

JULIE:

Do what?

WOLFE:

Who do you think came in on the *Mauretania* last night?

JULIE:

Wait a minute.
(*Grips the arm of her chair; prepares for the worst.*)
Well?

WOLFE:

Out of a blue sky—St. John Throckmorton.

JULIE:

Oh! Is that all?

KITTY:

Who's he?

WOLFE:

Who's he? Only the fellow that wrote Julie's new play, that's all.

DEAN:

Oh, the author!

JULIE:

How you scared me! . . . Send him back.

KITTY:

I'd love to meet him.

WOLFE:

Now, now, hold on a minute. We got to be nice to this fellow. He's given you a beautiful play here, and the point is he's going to write more of them.

FANNY:

The less you have to do with authors the better.

WOLFE:

Now, you do that for me, huh, Julie? Be there with Gwen at three?

FANNY:

They tell you how to read your lines.

WOLFE:

(*To Fanny.*)
That's right! Make it harder!

(*To Julie.*)

We call it settled, huh? You'll be there? Remember this fella's come all the way over from England.

JULIE:

But an English author! If he landed last night, won't he be lecturing this afternoon?

WOLFE:

If you comedians will keep still a minute I'll tell you what it is. This Throckmorton is a new playwright, and English to boot, and nothing will satisfy him he wants to read his play to the entire company.

(*A shout of derision from them all.*)

Now hold on a minute. This is a serious fellow—monocle, spats, gardenia—everything. With him this is part of being a playwright, reading the play aloud. The chances are he saw one of those photographs in the Green Room of His Majesty's Theatre, the whole company grouped around,—Beerbohm Tree in the middle—and What's-his-name reading *The Gay Lord Quex* to 'em—*You* should try to talk him out of it. I spent the morning.

JULIE:

I never heard anything so idiotic in my life! It's fantastic! But if you're really serious, and you want me to do this, I'll sit through it —only it can't be this afternoon.

WOLFE:

It's got to be this afternoon.

JULIE:

Oh, no! Then the whole thing's off. It would take hours. I have an appointment.

WOLFE:

Julie, how often do I ask a favor? Now this fella has got another play that I'm crazy to get hold of. If we're all just a little bit

nice to him—jolly him along—tell him how good he is. What do you say? H'm?

FANNY:

To hell with him!

JULIE:

But Oscar, why in the name of heaven does it have to be just this afternoon! Can't it be some other time!

WOLFE:

Say, what's going on this afternoon! You going to be married!

JULIE:

(*A startled look.*)
I can't, that's all, Oscar. I—can't! It's got to be some other time.

WOLFE:

Tomorrow you got a matinee. Monday you begin rehearsals.

JULIE:

Well—Sunday.

WOLFE:

Sunday he's out at Otto Kahn's. I tell you there *is* no other time. If you knew what you mean to him! He's all impressed about having you and Gwen in his first play. He knows all about you. Everything you've been in—all of you.

DEAN:

Really!

KITTY:

You don't say!

WOLFE:

So you wouldn't even do this for your old manager, huh? You got some little appointment—tea, or buy a hat—and compared to that Oscar don't matter.

JULIE:

Oh, now, Oscar—

WOLFE:

Well—never mind. The next time you ask me to do something for you—I do it anyhow.

FANNY:

I don't believe in humoring playwrights, but if it's such a favor to Oscar, that's different. . . .

(*Turns to Julie.*)

What're you up to that's so important this afternoon?

KITTY:

I'd do it, busy as I am.

FANNY:

Oscar's done a lot of things for you.

JULIE:

(*A second's hesitation.*)

You win, Oscar. At three o'clock—Enter Julie Cavendish, laughing.

WOLFE:

That's my girl!

(*Starts briskly toward the outer door, buttoning his coat with the air of one who has accomplished something. He talks as he goes.*)

Now don't forget. Three o'clock at my office.

(*He is putting on hat and coat. He takes out his watch again, his coat half on.*)

It's now two-twenty. You and Gwen leave here quarter to three, sharp. All right? I can depend on it?

JULIE:

I'll be there.

WOLFE:

That's the way to talk. Good-by, everybody!

(*Starts out.*)

DEAN:

(*Has picked up his manuscript, eager for a few last words to Wolfe about it.*)

Heh! Oscar!

WOLFE:

(*A little bewildered, glancing at the manuscript.*)

What's this?

DEAN:

(*Highly offended.*)

Well, on my word! That is the play that—

WOLFE:

Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes—

(*Into the alcove. Dean follows him rapidly. Kitty has been easing over toward Wolfe at the first sign of his departure. She now comes swiftly to the alcove, bent on pressing her own claim. They all talk at once.*)

DEAN:

Now, as I told you, there's a scene or two where I could use a better entrance. But that's a simple matter. The main thing is to get an absolutely— Kitty, for God's sake!

KITTY:

You are going to remember about me, aren't you? I've played nearly all those parts and there isn't one—

WOLFE:

Sure, sure! I read it tonight, give you a ring in the morning. Excuse me if I run!

(*To elevator.*)

Down!

(*The slam of the door.*)

(*Both Dean and Kitty break off. Dean strides on and across the room, hands in pockets, very disgruntled. Kitty follows him, bristling.*)

KITTY:

I'm on to you, all right. You're afraid I'll give too good a performance. You won't surround yourself with anything but second-rate people—you don't want anybody that's really good. Let me tell you I don't purpose to be held down artistically just because I'm married to Herbert Dean. I'm important too, don't forget. Ask any producer in New York—

DEAN:

(*At the same time.*)

Good God, Kitty, I've been a star for years! It's simply that you're not suited to this play, that's all. It's entirely the wrong kind of part for you. I should think you'd want to help instead of hindering. I've got to have peace of mind for this thing. You know very well you drive me crazy by your infernal—

JULIE:

(*Cutting in on the double conversation.*)

Oh, stop it, you two, will you! Stop it or get out of here! Go on in there and argue! I've been a star, you've been a star—I can't stand it, I tell you! Get out! Get out! Get out!

(*Takes an arm of each, and, while they are still arguing,*

propels them rapidly into the library. Slams the door on them. Turns swiftly, her back to the door, slumps a little against it, exhausted. A deep breath. The telephone rings on stage.)

(*Julie's sigh breaks off in the middle.*)

Ah!

(*A mock nod of deference in the direction of the phone.*)

FANNY:

Let it ring.

JULIE:

Oh, you never can tell.

(*Picks up the receiver.*)

Yes! . . . This is Julie Cavendish. . . . Yes, this is Miss Cavendish speaking. . . . Yes? . . . Yes—

(*To Fanny.*)

You were right. . . . Well, I'll tell you, it's very difficult for me to take part in any benefit performances just at present. . . . December 3. . . . Well, you see, I'll be playing and rehearsing at the same time. I'm afraid . . . Yes, I'm sure it's a very good cause. . . . The Newark Newsboys. . . . Oh, yes. . . . Well, I will if I possibly can.

(*One of those mirthless laughs in response to a bit of fulsome praise.*)

That's very kind of you. I'm so glad you enjoyed it. . . . No, I won't forget. . . . Century Theater, December 3.

(*Hangs up. To Fanny.*)

Mother, will you remind me? Bronchitis on December 3.

FANNY:

I shall do no such thing! If you said you'd play that benefit you'll play it, bronchitis or double pneumonia.

JULIE:

The honor of the family!

FANNY:

Now, Julie Cavendish, what's all this mooning about? What was that big renunciation scene? "I can't this afternoon. I can't. . . . All right—I will! I—will."

(*A gesture.*)

JULIE:

Gilbert's back.

FANNY:

Gilbert?

JULIE:

Gil Marshall. He's in New York. I had a note from him; and some flowers.

FANNY:

(*Slowly.*)
So that's it.

JULIE:

You see, it would have been nice to have had the afternoon clear.

FANNY:

Was he going to come here?

JULIE:

He's calling up at four to find out. Della will have to explain to him, that's all. A play reading! I'd better not tell him that.

FANNY:

So! He's come back to New York to spend his millions, h'm? Wonder it hasn't been all over the papers again. What's that they call him?—South American Diamond King?

JULIE:

Emerald, Mother. Much nicer.

FANNY:

Emeralds or diamonds. When I think that if it hadn't been for me you'd have gone off to South America—given up your career —everything.

JULIE:

I wonder what he's like now. He may have grown very charming. South America, and millions, and perhaps a little gray here. (*Touches her temple.*)

Sounds rather romantic.

FANNY:

No more romantic now than he was nineteen years ago! Ah! What a siege that was!

JULIE:

And what a demon you were!

FANNY:

I had to be. You thought because he looked serious and didn't say much that he was doing a lot of deep thinking. I knew it was because he couldn't think of anything to say.

JULIE:

You certainly acted like a mother in a melodrama.

FANNY:

I told him. I showed him that he couldn't hope to make you happy. A home and a husband for a girl like you! I said: "Here's a girl that's going to have fame and fortune—the world spread be-

fore her. Do you think that you can make up to her for all the things you'd rob her of! You and your South America! You and your engineering! . . ."

JULIE:

Yes, yes, I know, Mother. He went away, and we both lived happy ever after.

FANNY:

How I ever got you where you are today is more than I know. You were always at the point of running off with some young squirt.

JULIE:

But I never did. So it couldn't have been so serious.

FANNY:

Serious enough for them! That young Earl of Pembroke who went off to Africa, and that Philadelphia fellow that shot himself—

JULIE:

He was cleaning his gun.

FANNY:

They were always cleaning their guns. And when you finally married Rex Talbot! . . . I'll never forget the goings on then.

JULIE:

Mother, out of the whole crowd of them, why did I marry Rex?

FANNY:

He was the weakest, I guess.

JULIE:

I always said I wouldn't marry an actor. And Rex wasn't even a good actor. What was there about him, Mother?

FANNY:

Rex Talbot was a brilliant young loafer! And he had the most beautiful manners. He was the kind of man who could kiss your hand without looking silly.

JULIE:

I guess that was what he was always doing when I needed him. That's one thing you will admit about Gil, Mother. He would have been dependable.

FANNY:

When you're eighteen you don't marry a man because he's dependable.

JULIE:

But when you're a little older, you begin to think that maybe—

FANNY:

(*Quickly.*)
What's that?

JULIE:

Don't be alarmed. But I am curious to see him again. That's natural, isn't it? Only, it can't be this afternoon—that's sure. I had it all staged so beautifully, too. I was going to wear my rose beige, and a hat with a brim, and be dignified and wistful, yet girlish withal.

FANNY:

You can put on that act for him just as well after the show tonight. It's been nineteen years. What's a couple of hours more!

JULIE:

No. Midnight isn't as kind to me as it used to be. I'm just vain enough to want to look my best.

FANNY:

You are, eh?

JULIE:

I want to look fresh and young and radiant.

FANNY:

Is that all?

(*Gwen comes onto the balcony. She is smartly dressed in an afternoon frock, and on her arm she carries her coat. Her hat is in her hand. She is singing blithely and carelessly the newest jazz song hit. She comes quickly down the stairs.*)

GWEN:

(*At the foot of the stairs.*)
Has anybody seen my tan bag?
(*Throws coat and hat on nearby chair.*)

JULIE:

(*Remembering the engagement with Wolfe.*)
Gwen, you're not going out?

GWEN:

(*Goes swiftly to the library door.*)
I left it down here somewhere last night when—
(*Opens the library door. Dean's voice and Kitty's are heard in conflict, Dean's rising clearly above Kitty's.*)

DEAN:

—over my dead body—

KITTY:

—a woman like Fanny Ward—
(*Gwen bangs the door shut with a bewildered and startled expression.*)

FANNY:

(*Half to herself.*)
Shouts and murmurs.

GWEN:

But I think it's *in* there.

JULIE:

Gwen, was it this afternoon that you were going out to Westchester? With Perry?

GWEN:

Of course. He'll be along any minute.

JULIE:

Gwen, you've just got to leave word for him, that's all. You can't go.

GWEN:

Why not? What's the matter?

JULIE:

We've got to go right down to Oscar's office. I promised.

GWEN:

But, Mother—

JULIE:

I know. I just forgot you were going with Perry. It's a reading

of the play by Throckmorton. He got in last night. He's set on it. Wolfe made an awful fuss about it—a favor to him—we—

GWEN:

Mother, that's absurd. You know I've had this date with Perry for a week. And it isn't—just an ordinary date. I've never met his mother. She's giving this tea just for me. It's the first time she's asked me. She's having all these people in. How can I—

JULIE:

You can do it as well as I can, Gwen. I'm only doing it for Oscar.

GWEN:

But it can be some other time.

JULIE:

No—it can't. I've been all over it, and there isn't any other time. It's got to be this afternoon.

GWEN:

(*Stamping childishly away from them.*)
Oh, for the Lord's sake!

FANNY:

He picked a good day for it, this Thingumbob.

GWEN:

Why do I have to be there! I've read his old play!

JULIE:

So have I, for that matter.

GWEN:

(*On the verge of tears.*)
Why didn't you tell me sooner? You knew I had this date—

JULIE:

I'm sorry, Gwen, but I didn't know it myself until ten minutes ago. That's what Wolfe came to tell me, and I gave up something just as important—and more so. If you think it's going to be any fun for me to sit there and hear a play read—

GWEN:

(*Who has not stopped for Julie's speech, so that both are speaking.*)

—I wouldn't *care* if it wasn't Perry's mother, but she'll probably never ask me again. And I couldn't go if she did ask me. I'll be rehearsing all the time, and then I'll be acting, and it'll just go on like that forever. First thing you know I'll be an old woman—

(*Two long rings at the doorbell, followed by a terrific hammering at the outer door. The clamor is enough to stop them mid-speech.*)

JULIE:

(*Startled.*)

What's that! . . . Jo! . . . Della!

(*Goes to alcove.*)

GWEN:

What is it!

(*Runs to alcove.*)

(*Fanny pounds on the floor with her stick. Jo appears swiftly, followed by Della. Both go to alcove, Jo on a half run, Della walking very quickly. At the same moment, the double doors of the library are thrown open as Dean and Kitty emerge, brought out by the unusual noise.*)

DEAN:

What's the matter? What's going on?

KITTY:

My, what a racket!

(*With the others they go up toward outer door. They are*

huddled in a group as Jo opens the door. From off stage you hear their voices in surprise and alarm. Fanny alone is on stage.)

JULIE:

Tony!

GWEN:

Tony!

FANNY:

(*In a tone of unbelief.*)
Tony?

DEAN:

(*Over his shoulder, to Fanny.*)
It's Anthony!

(*At this point the group at the door breaks into a confused chorus of surprise, unbelief, amazement, interrogation. "But how did you get here!" "You were in Chicago this morning!" "We just got your telegram!" "What does this mean!" "I don't understand how you—" "Well, this is a surprise, Mr. Tony!" (Jo) "Well, of all people!" (Della) Tony's "sh-sh-sh-sh-sh!," attempting to silence them, sounds through this babel.*)

(*Tony enters, dramatically, elaborately stealthy, his look and gesture cautioning silence. He is wearing an all-enveloping fur coat, the collar of which is turned up so that his face is concealed. The brim of his soft felt hat is pulled down over his eyes. He comes down swiftly, almost in the manner of one who is backing away from something he fears. His face is turned away so that he is looking over his shoulder. His left coat sleeve, scarcely seen by the audience, hangs empty.*)

TONY:

Sh-sh-sh! Sh-sh, I tell you!

FANNY:

Tony! It's really you!!

(Julie, Gwen, Dean, Kitty have followed a few feet behind him, bewilderment in their faces. They are still exclaiming. Jo and Della, laden with luggage, come down from the alcove entrance so that in the hallway one glimpses a hallboy and a chauffeur, also carrying Tony's belongings. Distributed among these servants are a violin case, half a dozen bags and suitcases, very smart and glittering; an overcoat, a rug, golf sticks, hatbox, tennis racket, fencing foils in a case. The barrage of questioning opens up again with Julie, Dean and Kitty in the lead. Gwen, after the first flurry of the entrance, remembers her own problem. And, while she is interested in Tony's explanation, etc., she is plainly disturbed about Perry Stewart.)

JULIE:

But, Tony, how did you get here? It isn't possible!

DEAN:

My dear boy, this is rather bewildering!

KITTY:

Well, you're a great one! Of all the surprises!

FANNY:

If this is one of your jokes, Tony Cavendish—

TONY:

Sh-sh! Be quiet will you, everybody! Shut up!
(Complete quiet then, for a brief moment.)
Somebody go out there—
(Points to the entrance.)
and lock the doors! Gwen!
(Indicating library.)

Take a look out of that window! See if there's a man out there in a long overcoat!

(*Gwen vanishes a second through library doorway. Appears again immediately.*)

Take everything up to my room, Jo!

(*Jo starts slowly up the stairs, laden with luggage, a glance over his shoulder to indicate that the hallboy and the chauffeur are to follow him with their share of the burden. They follow.*)

Julie, have you got some change? I want a lot of change.

(*Turns toward his mother. Tilts up her chin, gaily. Kisses her.*)

How's America's sweetheart? Aren't you glad to see your baby boy?

JULIE:

Tony, will you quiet down long enough to explain this trick entrance? How did you get here?

TONY:

I'll tell you in a minute. First I want some money.

(*Glances up toward chauffeur, hallboy, Jo, on stairway. To chauffeur.*)

Let me see. You get twenty dollars.

(*Aside to others.*)

He brought me in from Mineola. . . . You get ten . . .

(*To the hallboy.*)

And ten apiece for those fellows downstairs. How many are there?

HALLBOY:

Three, sir. Two, and the doorman.

TONY:

All right. You take forty, and you get twenty. . . . And now remember, you fellows, if any of those reporters ask you, you

didn't see me, I never came in here. You don't know anything about me. Do you get that?

HALLBOY:

Yes, sir.

CHAUFFEUR:

I get you.

TONY:

Julie, let them have the money, will you?

JULIE:

Jo, you attend to it. My bag's on my dresser.

JO:

I'll see to it.

(*At the end of his own last line Tony has started to throw off his fur coat, shrugging his left shoulder free and revealing his left arm in a silk sling. A little shriek from Fanny.*)

FANNY:

Tony! Your arm!

JULIE:

You're hurt!

DEAN:

Is it a serious injury?

KITTY:

(*At sight of the arm.*)

Oh!

GWEN:

(*Half aloud.*)
Oh, Tony!

TONY:

It doesn't amount to anything. I hit him too hard, that's all.
(*Fanny makes a pitying sound between tongue and teeth.*)

JULIE:

How did it start in the first place?

DEAN:

Let's hear about it.

TONY:

Della, I'm starved. I haven't had a bite for twelve hours. Bring me everything you've got.

(*Della goes.*)

First I've got to have a hot bath. Come on upstairs, everybody, while I take a bath.

(*With Kitty and Dean in the lead, Kitty having one foot on the stairway, they all go up toward the stairs. Fanny is last.*)

JULIE:

Tony, will you listen to me! How did you get here today? You were in Omaha yesterday.

TONY:

I flew, of course. Came by aeroplane from Chicago.

DEAN:

Aeroplane!

KITTY:

Flew!

JULIE:

Tony Cavendish!

TONY:

I couldn't come on a train. They're watching the trains. I've got to lay low in this apartment till I sail.

FANNY:

Sail!

JULIE:

Sail where?

TONY:

Europe, of course. To-morrow on the *Aquitania*. . . . God, I hate pictures. . . . I've got to have a bath. If you want to hear the rest of it, come on up!

(*Tony starts again for the stairway, and Kitty and Dean mount quickly ahead of him. Julie follows just behind, with Fanny bringing up the rear. Gwen remains on stage. As they ascend the stairs, Tony, Julie, Dean and Kitty are talking constantly and simultaneously.*)

DEAN:

What happened out there, Tony? How did you get into this fight?

TONY:

He had it coming to him ever since we started to shoot. He put his girl into the picture and when she got stuck on me he got sore. The blowoff came when we were out on location. Doing a desert scene and Deming picked out the worst camel in the pack, and said to me, "You ride that one." I took one look at it and said, "The hell I will!" He said, "Who's directing this picture, you or me?" I said, "You're directing the picture, but you're not directing

me. I'm through with it, and you can take this to remember me by."

JULIE:

Unless you've killed him, Tony, I don't see why they're making all this fuss. And as for your going to Europe, I think it's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard of. And you walked out in the middle of a picture, of course. They'll probably sue you for a million dollars, and you'll never get another picture job.

(*Over the balcony railing to Gwen, just exiting.*)

Get your things on, Gwen—I'll be right down.

KITTY:

I've always heard things about those directors, though I must say I met David Wark Griffith and you couldn't ask for a more perfect gentleman. He said to me, Miss LeMoyne, he said, if you ever want to go into pictures, come right to me.

DEAN:

Perfectly right to put the fellow in his place. Catch me letting any whippersnapper tell me what to do. I'd show him!

(*At the top of the stairs Tony leaps ahead of the rest and is the first to exit through the curtained doorway. Dean and Kitty follow, then Julie. Fanny is sufficiently far behind the rest to cause her question to come out clearly as the uproar of the others dies away with their disappearance.*)

FANNY:

Who's this train woman? Zickery Zackery.

(*Disappears.*)

(*Gwen's mood throughout this scene has been one of thoughtful depression. After the general exit she drifts down toward the table where her hat and coat have been thrown. Without glancing at it she picks up her hat, listlessly. As she stands, thoughtful, the hallboy and the chauffeur appear on the balcony and descend the stairs quickly. The hallboy leads. He is counting a little sheaf of crisp bills. The*

chauffeur is just putting his bills into his pocket. They depart. Gwen merely glances at them, resumes her position. With a little spasmodic gesture that is almost despairing she crumples her hat in her hand. She slumps into a chair, beating one hand softly with the crushed felt hat. A deep sigh. She sits staring ahead of her. A brief moment of quiet and silence. Jo comes onto the balcony; descends the stairs. The doorbell rings. The sound electrifies Gwen into sudden action.)

GWEN:

I'll go, Jo.

(*Jo leaves. Gwen tosses the hat aside. Hurries up into the alcove.*)

PERRY STEWART:

(*Off. With exaggerated elegance.*)
Why! Fancy meeting *you* here!

GWEN:

Oh, shut up, Perry!

(*The sound of the door closing. Gwen comes back immediately, followed by Perry. He is speaking the next line as he comes.*)

PERRY:

Come on, get your bonnet on. I'd like to stop at the club and look at that horse, wouldn't you? It'll only take a minute.

GWEN:

Oh, Perry!

PERRY:

What's the matter?

GWEN:

I can't go.

PERRY:

What do you mean—you can't go!

GWEN:

They're going to read the play down at Wolfe's office.

PERRY:

What?

GWEN:

The author's going to read the play. And of course they had to pick today.

PERRY:

What are you talking about?

GWEN:

I can't go with you, Perry. I've got to go to Wolfe's office to hear the play read. There's no way out of it. I've got to do it. Isn't that damn!

PERRY:

You're joking.

GWEN:

But, Perry, I'm not! I know it sounds silly—

PERRY:

Silly! It's cuckoo! I never heard anything so ridiculous in my life. You can't mean you're breaking this date just to go and hear somebody read a play. . . . What play?

GWEN:

The play! The play that goes into rehearsal on Monday. That mother and I are doing.

PERRY:

Why, good God, you've read it a thousand times. You read it to me!

GWEN:

But this is different. The author's going to read it.

PERRY:

Well, let him—the silly ass! What do you care!

GWEN:

(*A long breath.*)
Now, Perry, please try to understand this. It's part of my job, and it's important.

PERRY:

Important to hear some idiot read a play that you've read again and again!

GWEN:

But it's more than that—it's a ceremony!

PERRY:

Gwen, you know as well as I do that we planned this thing a week ago. Mother's no Victorian, but listen, you can't do a thing like this. She wouldn't understand.

GWEN:

Perry, I want terribly to go! I made an awful fuss. But what could I do?

PERRY:

You know, Gwen, this isn't the first time you've done this to me.

GWEN:

Perry, please don't be unreasonable.

PERRY:

I don't think I was unreasonable about New Haven, when we were all set to go to the game—

GWEN:

But I explained. I told you. You said you understood. Wolfe suddenly phoned—I had to go down to see the chap he'd got as juvenile. If it was somebody I couldn't stand— And Wednesday I had to be photographed with Mother.

PERRY:

Yes, I know. I know.

GWEN:

Don't look so stern. You know this is all just because of the new play.

PERRY:

Yeh. But there'll always be a new play.

(*Looks directly at her.*)

Won't there?

GWEN:

I realize it's inconvenient sometimes. It is for me, too.

PERRY:

But what are we going to do about it, Gwen?

GWEN:

If I can't go—I can't.

PERRY:

I'm not talking about that. I mean us! . . . Look here, Gwen. You're no blue-eyed babe. I haven't dropped down on one knee and said will-you-be-mine, but you know I'm absolutely crazy about you. Don't you?

GWEN:

Uh-hm.

PERRY:

But what are we heading for? That's what I'd like to know. How's it all going to work out?

GWEN:

Why—I don't know. What is there to work out?

PERRY:

After all, you marry the person that you'd rather be with than anyone else in the world. But where'll you be half the time? Rehearsing, or something.

GWEN:

Now don't be fantastic! Rehearsals last three weeks.

PERRY:

All right. And then what! You're at the theater every night. Your work will just begin when mine is all over. You'll have dinner at six. I'll probably not even be home. By midnight you're all keyed up and ready to start out, but I've got to be at work in the morning. We'll be living in two different worlds!

GWEN:

But those things adjust themselves. Lots of other people have got around it.

PERRY:

I'd do anything in the world for you, Gwen. I'd die for you! But I can't be one of those husbands. Hanging around dressing rooms! Side-stepping scenery. Calling up the costumer. What am I going to do every night. See the show!

GWEN:

But you wouldn't want me to be one of those wives, would you! Bridge and household and babies!

PERRY:

Well, why not! What's wrong with that!

GWEN:

Because I can't do that sort of thing any more than you can do the other. I'm an actress, Perry. An actress!

PERRY:

Oh, what does that mean! Suppose you turn out to be as good as your mother—or better! What is there to it when it's all over? Get your name up in electric lights, and a fuse blows out—and where are you!

GWEN:

I won't let you belittle my work. It's just as important as yours. I suppose the world would go to pieces if you didn't sell a hundred shares of Consolidated Whatnot for ten cents more than somebody paid for it!

PERRY:

You can't compare business with acting.

GWEN:

Is that so! I can give you the names of actors and actresses of

three hundred years ago—dozens of them! Name me two seventeenth-century stockbrokers.

PERRY:

All right, I'll give up my work. That'll be dandy! And trail along behind you carrying your Pekinese, huh? . . . Not me!

GWEN:

It's not a Pekinese! . . . Oh, Perry, what are we talking like this for! It's horrible.

(*Goes to him.*)

Forgive me! How could I talk like that to you!

PERRY:

It's my fault. I didn't know what I was saying.

GWEN:

Perry—dear!

(*He takes her in his arms.*)

PERRY:

Oh, what does anything matter!

GWEN:

Weren't we a couple of idiots! We've never quarreled before.

PERRY:

And we won't again. There isn't anything that matters to me except you. Business and acting— We must have been crazy!

GWEN:

And you're all that matters to me.

PERRY:

Gwen darling!

(*They kiss again.*)

You're wonderful. . . . Now come on, honey. It's late.

GWEN:

What?

PERRY:

Why—you are coming with me, aren't you?

GWEN:

Oh, Perry!

PERRY:

Huh?

GWEN:

You haven't heard a word I've said.

PERRY:

I heard everything you said. You heard what I said, too, didn't you!

GWEN:

Oh, Perry, we're not going to go all over this again, are we?

PERRY:

No. We're not going all over it again. Not at all. We're not going over any of it again. It just comes down to one thing, that's all.

GWEN:

It's like a bad dream! I can't go, Perry! Haven't I explained to you that I can't.

PERRY:

Oh! . . . Yes . . . Well, I've got to get started, of course, if I'm going to get there. Good-by.

(*He has been making a confused withdrawal. Hurt. Angry. You hear the door bang.*)

(*Gwen stands, her head up, defiantly. Then, as the realization of what has happened creeps over her, she becomes less confident. Even terrified.*)

(*Julie appears on the balcony from center door. She is in hat and coat. She is first heard talking over her shoulder to Dean and Kitty, who are unseen in the hallway off the balcony.*)

JULIE:

If he'd only try persuasion now and then instead of knocking people down right away . . .

(*Glances at her wrist watch.*)

Good Lord!

(*Moving swiftly along balcony, calls over the railing.*)

Are you ready, Gwen?

DEAN:

(*Entering.*)

Well, I'll be on my way, too.

KITTY:

Where are you going?

JULIE:

(*Descending the stairs. Sees that Gwen is not dressed for the street.*)

Good heavens, Gwen! Get your things on! What have you been doing? I must say you weren't much interested in Tony.

(*Goes into library.*)

(*Fanny comes onto the balcony. She is talking in a rather high-pitched voice to an unseen Tony in the room she has just left.*)

FANNY:

Stay on the stage where you belong, you wouldn't get mixed up with all that riffraff!

(*A mumble to herself as she stumps along the balcony and toward the stairs.*)

Moving pictures!

JULIE:

(*From library.*)

Is the car downstairs?

DEAN:

(*Has gone up to alcove. Starts to plunge into his coat.*)

Drop me at the Lambs, Julie?

KITTY:

You're late, aren't you? Lackaye'll be worried.

(*Into her coat.*)

(*Tony appears on the balcony, singing a snatch of an aria; he is wearing a gay silk bathrobe, monogrammed, embroidered, tasseled. He advances with a romantic swing to the balcony rail. Reaching it, he strikes a magnificent pose, aided by a high top note. Fanny picks up the melody and carries it a phrase further.*)

JULIE:

(*Re-enters from library, pulling on her gloves.*)

Lord, we're terribly late!

TONY:

(*Shouts toward servants' door.*)

Jo, where the hell's my lunch!

JULIE:

(*Making a last dash.*)

Gwen, *will* you get your things on? . . . 'By, Mother! . . .

Where do you want to go, Bert? . . . See you later, Tony! . . . Gwen, what the devil's the matter with you! Why don't you come?

GWEN:

I'm not coming.

JULIE:

(*Turns quickly.*)
Now, Gwen, don't start all that again. It's so silly.

GWEN:

I'm not going, do you understand! I'm not ever going. I'm not going to act in it at all.

JULIE:

(*Impatiently.*)
Oh, for heaven's sake!

FANNY:

Don't be sulky.

DEAN:

My dear Gwen!

KITTY:

What's the matter with her?

JULIE:

Will you put on your hat and coat?

(*Turns again as if to go.*)

GWEN:

Listen to me!

(*A note in her voice makes them realize that here is something serious.*)

I don't just mean I'm not going to be in this play. I'm not going to be in any play.

JULIE:

My offspring has gone mad.

GWEN:

I mean it. I'm through with the stage. I'm never going to act again.

JULIE:

What are you talking about!

KITTY:

She does mean it!

DEAN:

Not act again! Why—why—brrrrr—why—

FANNY:

The child's sick!

TONY:

(*From the balcony.*)
Don't go into pictures.

GWEN:

Please! I've made up my mind, and all of you put together can't stop me. I'm through with the stage, and I'll tell you why, if you want to know. I'm not going to have it mess up my whole life!

(*A hysterical jumble of attempted explanation. Her talk is pierced from time to time by exclamations from the others of the family.*)

. . . do you know what he did! He walked right out of the

room. . . . If you think I'm going to give him up for a miserable little stage career just because we've always done it . . . we'd never see each other . . . he'd get up in the morning and I wouldn't go to work till night. . . . Look at this afternoon with his mother waiting out there . . . it'll be like that for years and years . . . only it's not going to be! You're not going to ruin my life! I'm going to quit now, while there's time! I'm going to marry Perry Stewart and be a regular person! And nothing you can say is going to stop me!

JULIE:

I never heard such silly rot in all my life!

(*From Dean, Fanny, Tony, Kitty such lines as: "Why, it's preposterous! Quit and get married!" (Tony.) "Who's Perry Stewart?" (Fanny.) "Never thought I'd live to see this day."*)

I don't know what you're talking about.

GWEN:

Well, *I* know what I'm talking about. I'm sick of all this. I'm sick of being a Cavendish! I want to be a human being!

(*From the others a shocked murmur.*)

FANNY:

What's that!

DEAN:

But you *are* a Cavendish!

JULIE:

Of course you are.

GWEN:

But I don't want to be!

JULIE:

You've got to be! What do you think we've worked for all these years!

FANNY:

You can't do this to us!

JULIE:

My God! What anyone else would give for your chance!

DEAN:

Yes!

FANNY:

It's absurd!

JULIE:

You can be the greatest of us all. Aubrey and Fanny Cavendish have just been steppingstones for you!

FANNY:

(*Rises. She is all dignity.*)
What's that! What's that!

JULIE:

Oh, Mother, please!

FANNY:

I'll be a steppingstone for nobody! And as for Aubrey Cavendish, there's nobody since his day that can touch him!

DEAN:

One minute, please!

GWEN:

(*Taut. Defiant.*)
Listen to them! *That's* what I mean.

DEAN:

I belive my Macbeth still takes rank as the finest interpretation of its day and age.

JULIE:

(*Cutting in on Dean's speech and topping it.*)
For heaven's sake, you two! Telling how good you are! I'm pretty good myself, but you don't hear me talking about it!

KITTY:

(*Very haughtily.*)
Well, if you want *my* opinion—

JULIE:

Well, we don't want your opinion.

(*From this spot on, Kitty and Julie are talking together at each other; and Dean and Fanny are talking together, combating each other. All this time Tony, on the stairs, has been viewing this family scene with a good deal of interest and enjoyment.*)

KITTY:

No, I suppose not. Just because I'm not one of your precious Cavendishes I haven't the right to speak. But I want to tell you that Kitty LeMoyne can hold her head up with the best of them when it comes to acting. I may not have reached my present position by stepping on the heads of other people. I've won out by talent and hard work. It isn't always the people who have their names up in electric lights that are the best actors. I may not be a tradition in the theater, but just the same—

JULIE:

(*At the same time.*)

This is purely a family matter and it seems to me that you'll save yourself a good deal of trouble if you'll just keep out of it.

(*Turns her attention to Fanny and Dean, who, by now, have resumed their argument.*)

Oh, who cares which of you was the best actor! If it comes to a showdown, probably neither of you was so doggoned good! And while you're about it, Herbert Dean, will you tell that wife of yours to stop talking. This is no concern of hers. Why doesn't she keep out of it! And why shouldn't Gwen be a greater actress than any of us! At least she's got intelligence on her side, and that's more than I can say of any of the rest of you.

(*Turning again to Kitty.*)

Oh, all right! You're Bernhardt! You're Modjeska! You're Duse!

DEAN:

Role for role, my dear Fanny, I am a better actor than Aubrey Cavendish ever dreamed of being. You must remember that his was the day of the provinces, and while I have no doubt that he was a great favorite in the hamlets, it is quite another thing to win critical acclaim in London and New York. You may recall that on three successive nights I played Othello, Iago, and Petruchio, and that never under the historic roof of Wallack's Theatre have there been three such ovations. And a year later, at the old Vic I—

FANNY:

You miserable upstart! Do you expect me to stand here and allow you to mention yourself and Aubrey Cavendish in the same breath! Aubrey Cavendish was an artist. He wouldn't have had you as his dresser! The greatest actors of his generation have sat at the feet of Aubrey Cavendish. Henry Irving, Beerbohm Tree, Richard Mansfield! And you have the presumption to fancy that your absurd struttings are comparable in any way with the histrionism of Aubrey Cavendish, the greatest actor that the English-speaking stage has ever seen! You can stand there and tell me—

(*As the four voices approach a climax, the telephone starts ringing. Simultaneously Della and Jo enter, each with a laden tray. Tony greets the trays.*)

TONY:

Ah! Food! Right over here, Jo!

(*Gwen is standing a little apart from the others, intense. Della deposits her tray hurriedly. Goes to telephone.*)

DELLA:

(*In phone.*)

Hello! . . . She's on her way down, Mr. Wolfe! . . . Quite a while ago. . . .

(*The argument is still raging.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

The scene is the same.

The time is about six o'clock on the following afternoon, Saturday.

There are fresh flowers in bowls and vases. Two of the lamps are lighted. The room is not yet fully lighted for the evening, however. The double doors leading into the library are closed.

At the rise of the curtain there is heard the clash of fencing foils, the thud of feet, and male voices calling out occasional fencing terms, sometimes in earnest, sometimes mockingly. "Have at thee, varlet!" in Tony's voice.

The library doors open. Fanny enters. She is carrying a newspaper in one hand. Walks with her cane.

FANNY:

Jo!

(*She glances toward the balcony, from which come the sounds of combat.*)

Jo!

(*Goes toward right, turns up one lamp on her way. Shivers a little, draws about her a little shawl that hangs at her shoulders.*)

(*Della enters.*)

Della, the fire's nearly out in the library.

DELLA:

(*Over her shoulder.*)

Jo! Bring some wood.

(*A muffled answer from Jo, off.*)

FANNY:

I must have dozed off.

(*Another little shiver.*)

What time is it, anyway?

DELLA:

(*Lighting the remaining lamps, tidying the rooms, picking up the papers, plumping cushions.*)

It's near six, I guess. Miss Julie's late. Said she was coming right home after the matinee. Course Saturday lot of young girls in the house, crowding backstage, taking her time up.

FANNY:

More likely it's that passport of Tony's that's keeping her. Europe! Got to sail for Europe! Huh!

DELLA:

One of those reporters tried to get up in the service elevator a little while ago, but they got him.

FANNY:

That crowd still standing around down there? In the wet snow?

DELLA:

There certainly is a mob of 'em. Jo says since that piece in the paper tonight there's a bigger crowd than the time Mr. Tony got his first divorce.

(*Clash! Clash! from the balcony. The sounds of combat swell into an uproar as the battle grows hot. "Aha!" from Tony. A shouted speech or two, unintelligible but loud, from the panting combatants.*)

DELLA:

I wish Mr. Tony'd stop that fencing. Poor Miss Gwen feeling the way she does.

FANNY:

Tony! Hush that racket! . . . He's carved his way through every room in the house this afternoon. I had to lock the door of my bathroom.

(*Jo enters. He carries an armful of fireplace wood.*)

JO:

Gee! Ought to see the crowd down there now! And they just rolled up one of those trucks with a lot of lights on it.

DELLA:

Good grief! What for?

JO:

Going to take movies, I guess. Catch everybody going in and out.

DELLA:

Gosh!

FANNY:

They'll take no movies of me.

JO:

And there's a fellow down there selling hot dogs and doing quite a business. . . . You want your tea, Mrs. Cavendish?

FANNY:

Too near dinnertime.

(*The clash of foils comes up again. McDermott and Tony, fencing, appear on the balcony, the former backing away from Tony's attack.*)

DELLA:

(*Going upstairs.*)
I brought a cup up to Miss Gwen, but she wouldn't take it again.

FANNY:

Still in her room, is she?

DELLA:

Hardly eaten a mouthful in twenty-four hours.
(*Della goes on out, after successfully dodging the fencers.*)
(*The combat leads across the balcony and down the stairs, Tony maintaining the advantage and keeping up at the same time a running commentary, couched in a mixture of medieval and movie subtitle style.*)

TONY:

Ha! He gives ground! Black Jennifer knows now the dark fate that soon is to o'ertake him! . . . Came the dawn, and yet they battled grimly upon the ancient parapet.

MCDERMOTT:

Je's! Go easy there!

TONY:

Ha! He begs for quarter! Too late! Expect no mercy from Anthony the Elegant.

FANNY:

"Ah, the immortal passado! the punto reverso! the hai!"

TONY:

Ha, ha, varlet! Thou didst not know, what time thou didst dash a flagon of Burgundy from this hand, that thou hadst run smack up against the niftiest little swordsman in all of Gascony.

McDERMOTT:

Heh!

TONY:

And now, thou cur, prepare to meet thy end!
Prince, call upon the Lord!
I skirmish . . . feint a bit
I lunge . . . I keep my word.
At the last line, I hit.
(*He disarms McDermott.*)

JO:

Hot dog!

TONY:

Come, a kiss, my pretty wench!
(*Fanny falls into Tony's mood. Takes a few mincing steps to the victor's arms.*)
For have I not won thee fairly!
(*Tosses his sword to McDermott, who deftly catches it.*)
Here you are, Mac. I'll be up in a couple of minutes.

JO:

I told you he was good.
(*Disappears into library.*)

McDERMOTT:

(*Goes up the stairs.*)
Yah! Gee!

FANNY:

You should have seen your father hold off eight of them—Aubrey and Fanny Cavendish in *A Gentleman of France.*
(*She works her way toward the stairs, her cane in one hand, the folded newspaper still in the other. She accompanies her next few lines with graphic illustration, in which both cane and newspaper become weapons.*)

He'd send one head first right down the stairway, throw another one over the banister, quick as a wink he'd whirl and get one creeping up behind him—that scene alone took a full bottle of liniment every week.

TONY:

(*Pats the withered cheek.*)
Those were the days, Fanny.
(*Fanny, nodding her head in reminiscent confirmation, turns away. Tony rolls down the sleeves of his shirt; a realization of the hour disturbs him.*)
Say, where the devil is Julie? What time is it, anyhow? It's late!

FANNY:

Maybe the weather's delaying her. She rings down quarter to five.

TONY:

Well, my God, is she getting my passport or isn't she? I've got to get out of here! I can't sail without a passport! She ought to know that!

FANNY:

Now, now! Wolfe is helping her. You'll get it all right.

TONY:

But when? The boat sails at midnight! I've got to get aboard early if I'm going to dodge that mob down there!
(*A vague gesture toward the downstairs region.*)
I ought to crack a couple of them in the jaw—that's what I ought to do!

FANNY:

You've done enough jaw cracking. How are you ever going to get past them anyhow, even if Julie does get you a passport?

TONY:

Lots of ways. They don't know I'm here—they're not sure at all.

FANNY:

They've got a pretty good idea or they wouldn't be hanging around all day. Trying to get up in the elevator; calling up on the phone in funny voices.

TONY:

Oh, the hell with them! I've got to get on that boat tonight! God! If Julie hasn't got that passport!

FANNY:

(*With something of Tony's fire.*)
Suppose she hasn't? Who says you've got to get on the boat? What for?

TONY:

A million reasons! I feel like it! I want to get so far from Hollywood and sunshine—I never want to hear "camera" again! Or "stage" either, for that matter! You can have it! I'm through!

FANNY:

Through! You've been saying that ever since *Fauntleroy*.

TONY:

I mean it this time! That's why I'm going abroad! Give me two years in Munich with my violin—under Ascher—and I'll show you what the stage means to me! I can be a great musician! . . . Or I may go away into India with Krishnamurti and study Hindu philosophy! It's the only real thing in the world! You wear just one garment—a long white robe—and you eat just one food! Rice!

FANNY:

That'll be restful!

TONY:

The stage! I'd rather spend ten minutes in the Cathedral at Chartres—I don't give a damn if I nev—

(*In the course of making a sweeping gesture he encounters the huge pile of letters on the table.*)

What the hell is all this stuff? They've been here all day! What are they?

FANNY:

(*Shouting at him.*)

They're for you! We've told you a dozen times! It's your mail we've been saving!

TONY:

Well, why didn't you say so?

(*A second's calm while he picks up a handful of letters. Then he dumps them all into the wastebasket. Turns away a few steps.*)

FANNY:

(*Advancing on him.*)

Don't think you're fooling me about why you're going to Europe. Cathedrals, and violins, and rice! It's this Dago woman you're running away from. Else why was she on the train with you?

TONY:

Oh, I'm not afraid of her. I gave her the slip at Chicago.

FANNY:

Just the same, that's why you're going to Europe! Don't lie to me, Tony Cavendish!

TONY:

(*Reluctantly giving ground.*)
Well, suppose I am!

(*Flares up again.*)

Only, I'm not afraid of her!

FANNY:

Then, what is it?

TONY:

(*Paces a bit first.*)
It's that God-damned process server she's got after me!

FANNY:

What God-damned process server?

TONY:

(*It is being torn out of him.*)
The breach-of-promise suit.

FANNY:

Breach of promise?

TONY:

(*Scornfully.*)
Two hundred thousand dollars! She wants two hun—

(*On fire again.*)

That's why I've got to stay cooped up here! You don't think I'm afraid of reporters, do you? But if they ever clap that paper on me I can't sail!

FANNY:

Two hundred thousand for breach of promise. Assault and battery on this director—probably another hundred thousand. And breaking your contract with the picture company—I guess half a million will cover it.

TONY:

It's worth it, I tell you! God, that sunshine!

FANNY:

(*Fiercely.*)
What did you ever promise this movie actress that's worth two hundred thousand dollars?

TONY:

Oh, she claims to have some letters—I didn't want her in the first place! She was Deming's girl! That's why he got sore!

FANNY:

Who is she, anyhow? Where'd she come from?

TONY:

Zeta Zaydak! She's a Pole.

FANNY:

Look out for Poles!
(*The phone bell rings. Tony darts to the telephone, takes the receiver off the hook and listens for a second. Then he quietly puts the receiver down on the table; edges away.*)

FANNY:

A woman's voice?

TONY:

No, but I'm not taking chances.
(*He goes back to the phone, a little furtiveness in his manner; takes up the receiver and listens again. Apparently he is satisfied that the caller is gone; he hangs up the receiver. Instantly the bell starts to ring again; Tony quickly takes the receiver off again. Puts it once more on the desk; slides away quickly from the instrument.*)
(*The sound of the outer door opening.*)

Who's that?

(*The slam of the door.*)

(*Julie enters. She has come in from the matinee. She is wearing smart winter street clothes—a luxurious fur coat and a costume to match. There is a bristling sort of vigor in the way she stations herself in the doorway.*)

JULIE:

Damn your dear public, Tony!

TONY:

Did you get it?

JULIE:

The entire population of New York is standing on the doorstep, howling for a glimpse of America's foremost screen lover. In the meantime they take what Fortune sends, and it just so happened to be me.

FANNY:

Your coat's ripped!

TONY:

Julie! The passport! Have you got my passport?

JULIE:

(*Calls.*)

Della! . . . Oh! What a dandy day this has been!

(*Della appears on balcony.*)

Della, my slippers are soaking! Bring me some mules. . . . I had to get out at the corner—you don't dare drive up. And my dear Mrs. Cavendish, have you ever played to an audience made up entirely of sea lions!

(*She is energetically tearing off hat, coat, probably standing on one leg to unstrap her slipper, which she kicks off across the room. Della, meantime, comes down with mules and*

fresh stockings. During Julie's speech she kneels and assists her with stockings, slippers, etc.)

JULIE:

They came in wet to the knees and never did dry off. They spent the first act taking galoshes off and the last act putting them on. *You* know . . .

(*Stoops to pull imaginary zippers.*)

. . . I looked out once during the last act and couldn't see a face. And cough! I think they had a cheer leader. Lincoln couldn't have held them with the Gettysburg Address. How's Gwen, Mother? Is she better?

TONY:

Now, look here, Julie!

JULIE:

Shut up, Tony! . . . Has she eaten anything? What's she doing?

FANNY:

No. Wouldn't take her tea.

JULIE:

I'll go up.

DELLA:

Dinner at the usual time, Miss Julie?

JULIE:

No, hold it awhile, Della.

DELLA:

(*Edging toward the door as she talks, delivering the day's messages in a sort of monotone.*)

Mr. Cartwright phoned, and Mrs. Blair's dinner's postponed till a week from Sunday, and—

JULIE:

Not now, Della, please.

DELLA:

And the La Boheme shop says your dress is all ready.

(*Goes.*)

TONY:

Dress be damned! My boat saiis at midnight. What have you done about my passport!

JULIE:

Tony, my love, Wolfe is bringing it.

TONY:

He is? Why didn't you say so? Thank God!

JULIE:

He's been pulling all sorts of wires. He's been in and out of my dressing room all afternoon. *Everybody's* been in and out of my dressing room all afternoon. Compared to my dressing room Grand Central Terminal was a rustic retreat. And all on account of you, my baby. Reporters, and process servers, and sob sisters. . . . I'm going up to Gwen.

FANNY:

Gwen's all right. You lie down and take it easy—with another show to play.

TONY:

Listen, Julie—how soon'll he get here?

JULIE:

Oh, I don't know. Right away. And he's bringing the money for you, too. They kept your reservation, and I've paid for it. You

neglected to tell me that you were roughing it across in the royal suite.

TONY:

I can't travel like a stowaway.

JULIE:

Hire a battleship, for all I care! But remember I'm a working girl. What do you do with all your money, anyway? You go out to Hollywood with a billion-dollar contract and you buy a pink plaster palace for one hundred and fifty thousand, an Isotta Fraschini for twenty thousand, an Hispano Suiza for twenty-five, a camp in the Sierras for another fifty—good God, you were sunk a quarter of a million before they ever turned a crank on you! . . . And as soon as they start to take a picture you knock out the director and quit.

TONY:

It'll all blow over in a month. That's why I want to get away.

JULIE:

But why does it have to be Europe! What are you going to do when you get there!

FANNY:

He's going to eat rice and play the violin.

TONY:

I'm going to bathe in the pure beauty of Athens! I want to lose myself in the Black Forests of Bavaria!

FANNY:

Mm! Switched your bookings.

TONY:

I don't know where I'm going! Any place where it rains all the time!

JULIE:

All right. Go to Pago Pago. But attend to your own passport. I got my Art to look after.

(*Doorbell rings. Tony dashes for the stairs; turns.*)

JULIE:

Keep calm! They can't get up here.

TONY:

Think we'd better open it?

JULIE:

You'll have to go out to catch the boat, won't you? They can't back the *Aquitania* up to the door.

TONY:

I'll get out, all right, when the time comes.

(*Jo enters. Starts toward the outer door.*)

Wait, Jo! . . .

(*To Julie.*)

Maybe it's Wolfe, huh?

JULIE:

Shoot from the hip, Jo.

JO:

(*Genially.*)

Reminds me of the time the Grand Jury was after you. Remember that sheriff?

(*In the alcove.*)

When you took his gun away!

TONY:

Keep a foot against the door!

JO:

Who's out there!

DEAN:

(*A muffled voice, off.*)
What, what! This is Herbert Dean!

JO:

(*Opening door.*)
Oh, come right in, Mr. Dean.
(*Herbert Dean enters, with Jo following him on. His entrance is marked by relieved sighs from Julie, Fanny, and Tony.*)

DEAN:

They ought to be arrested, those fellows.
(*Flicking from his garments the contaminating touch of those who had waylaid him on the sidewalk. This finished, he starts to remove his coat. Jo takes it, with hat and stick.*)
Pushing me all around.

TONY:

You didn't tell them I was here?

DEAN:

Of course not. But I hope, Anthony, that your next director will prove more congenial to you.

TONY:

There isn't going to be any next director, old socks. . . . Come on, Jo—I've got to pack and get out of here—
(*Leaps up the stairs, followed by Jo.*)
—Tell you what I want you to do. Want you to sneak out and get me three taxis exactly alike—
(*By this time they are both gone.*)

DEAN:

What the devil's he up to!

JULIE:

Mother'll tell you. I'm going up to see Gwen.

DEAN:

Well—wait!

FANNY:

I'm going in by the fire, Bertie, if you want to talk to me.

DEAN:

No—Julie—I want to talk to you. I've had a devil of a day. In the first place, where's Oscar? I gave him my play to read last night and I haven't been able to find him since.

FANNY:

Isn't that funny!

(*Goes into the library.*)

JULIE:

He's coming here, Bert. Nail him.

DEAN:

Really! Oh, fine! Ah—just one thing more!

(*Detaining her.*)

And this is what I really came about.

JULIE:

Not now. Please!

DEAN:

Now, hold on, Julie. I've got to talk to you. It's vital.

JULIE:

Bert, can't it be some other time? I've simply got to see Gwen.

DEAN:

No, no. I never needed you worse than I do now. I wouldn't tell this to anyone else, but I know you'll understand. Give me just a minute. Please!

JULIE:

Why—what is it? What's the matter?

DEAN:

You see, it's this way. These last five or six years I haven't—things haven't exactly—damn it all, it's youth! Youth! They write all the plays for young whippersnappers! You've got to be built like a—uh—greyhound! Now, mind you, I'm just as youthful as anybody. I keep in good condition. Try to. Walk. But it's impossible to get a good massage nowadays.

JULIE:

Your figure's grand, darling.

DEAN:

Not bad. But you see, with my position—I can't go round—sit in offices—they've got to come to me! I sit and wait for letters, rush to the telephone—think each time—first thing you know it's months and months— What am I to do!

JULIE:

Oh, you're just a little down. Something may come along any minute.

DEAN:

That's just it! I've got it! This play! It's a godsend! Just what I need! It'll put me on my feet again. I can easily get in condition for it. Diet! Exercise!

JULIE:

Yes, I know. I read it. It struck me then, that if instead of trying —if you'd be willing to play one of those attractive—uh—slightly grayed parts—

DEAN:

Oh, I can get around that. Pink lights—and I don't look over thirty. But here is the real difficulty. It's the girl. She's got to be young—beautiful! A vision! I can't have—

(*Very confidentially.*)

To tell you the truth, Kitty will ruin it. She'll ruin *me!* She'll kill the first real chance I've had in years.

JULIE:

But you know I can't do anything with her.

DEAN:

But you can! That's just it. For God's sake, Julie, say you'll do it.

JULIE:

Do what!

DEAN:

Take her off my hands. Give her that part in your play—you know—the colonel's wife. She'd be very good in that.

JULIE:

But, Bert, I've got a—

DEAN:

Yes, yes—I know. But you could let that woman out. The point is, you're big enough, Julie. It wouldn't hurt your play. You're so admired, and popular—nothing can stop you. Now, I've never asked a favor before—little things, maybe—but we've always

stood by each other—the family. Let me go and tell Kitty you suggested it.

JULIE:

But I had Kitty before, and—

DEAN:

I know. But this will be different. She'll be very good in that part. . . . I'm sure to have a hit. I could pay back everything I owe you—you, and different people—

JULIE:

Oh, that's all right. Don't think of that now.

DEAN:

(*Pats her hand, gratefully.*)

You're a brick, Julie. . . . You've been very kind—I hadn't meant to come to you again—but you're the only one—I wonder —I was going to ask if you could spare another five hundred—just a few weeks—

(*Outer doorbell rings sharply, three times.*)

JULIE:

That's Oscar!

DEAN:

Oh! Splendid! Now, what do you say, Julie? Will you do that for me? Will you?

JULIE:

(*Weakly.*)

Bert, I'll try to dig it up. I don't know—

(*Della enters, heading for outer door.*)

Della, that's Mr. Wolfe. Tell him I'll be right down. I've got Gwen up here.

DELLA:

(*Pausing on her way to the door.*)
How about dinner, Miss Julie? It's getting late.

JULIE:

Oh, I can't right now, Della.
(*Della continues toward door. Julie is going up the stairs by this time.*)
I don't know what to say about Kitty, Bert. You've given me an awful problem. Fortunately I've got so many that one more doesn't matter.

DEAN:

Then you will do it, huh? Good!

JULIE:

Good! Hell, it's perfect!

(*She goes.*)

WOLFE:

(*As Della opens the door for him.*)
Say, what a mob scene you got down there!

DELLA:

It certainly is terrible, all right.

WOLFE:

(*Entering.*)
Terrible, and what's more it's bad publicity.
(*Sees Dean. Breaks off. From his look in Dean's direction he is plainly far from delighted.*)
(*Della follows. Waits to receive Wolfe's coat.*)

DEAN:

Ah, Oscar, my boy!

WOLFE:

Hello.

DEAN:

This is fortunate!

DELLA:

Miss Julie'll be right down. Shall I take your coat?

WOLFE:

No, thanks. I don't stay.

(*Fanny appears.*)

FANNY:

Hello, Wolfe! I thought it was your voice.

(*Della goes.*)

WOLFE:

Your gifted daughter, Mrs. Cavendish, certainly gave a fine ham performance this afternoon.

FANNY:

Did you get his passport?

WOLFE:

Well, I want to talk to Julie about it. Where is she?

FANNY:

She's up with Gwen.

WOLFE:

Yah? How is Gwen? Come to her senses yet?

FANNY:

Stubborn as ever.

WOLFE:

She'll come around.

DEAN:

Now, Oscar, I've got a dinner engagement.

(*His watch.*)

Tell me how the play impressed you. Wonderful, isn't it? Tremendous!

WOLFE:

(*Hesitatingly.*)

M-m-m, yes, b—

DEAN:

I knew you'd be crazy about it! Now I'll start lining up a cast and come in to see you tomorrow. About what time, say?

WOLFE:

Oh—uh—any time. I don't know—

DEAN:

(*A dignified scamper up to the alcove, throws his coat over his arm, claps on his hat, takes his stick.*)

That's fine! Fine! We can start rehearsals in about ten days, eh?

WOLFE:

(*Strolls uneasily up toward alcove.*)

Now, not so fast, Dean. Pretty heavy show you got there. Take a pile of money to put that on.

DEAN:

(*In protest.*)
Oh, no, no, no, no.

WOLFE:

Say! Fourteen scenes. Grand Central Terminal, Garden of Eden, Court of King Solomon, Battle of Waterloo—

DEAN:

We can do it all with drapes.

(*He hurries out.*)

(*Wolfe walks slowly across the room, puffing out his cheeks in rather stunned perplexity. His eye roves to Fanny, a grim figure in her chair. The two are in accord.*)

FANNY:

I think Bertie has retired and doesn't know it.

WOLFE:

I wish they were all like you, Fanny.

(*Comes over to pat her shoulder.*)

What d'you think? Going to be able to troupe again after the holidays?

FANNY:

Tried to tell you yesterday, but you were so busy with your English playwrights.

WOLFE:

Say, if I had to pick one actress out of the whole caboodle of 'em you know who it'd be. Come on, tell me. Think you can start out again? Sure enough?

FANNY:

You can dust off the *Castlemaine* scenery, and I'd just as soon you'd route me to the Coast.

WOLFE:

'At a girl! You're worth a dozen of these New-York-run actresses. No foolishness about you. No private cars, and maids in the contract, and telegrams from the company manager you won't go on because the theater's cold. No, sir! You're the girl that does twenty-eight hundred in Boise City, Idaho, and catches the six-fourteen next morning for Pocatello.

FANNY:

I did twenty-nine hundred in Boise City.

WOLFE:

Chairs in the aisles, h'm? I tell you—

(*A gesture toward the departed figure.*)

—if Bert had taken his hits out on the road he wouldn't be in this jam today. But by nature Bertie is a Lambs Club actor, and look what happens! In a couple more years he'll own six toupees and be playing Baron Stein in an all-star revival of *Diplomacy*.

FANNY:

(*Getting to her feet to take the oath.*)

May God strike me dead if I ever appear in an all-star revival!

(*She sits again.*)

(*Julie appears on the balcony. Starts downstairs.*)

JULIE:

Well, she's promised to dress and come out of that room, anyhow. That's more than she's done all day.

WOLFE:

Say, what kind of a show are you going to give tonight, with all this hullabaloo!

JULIE:

Once Tony goes, things will be a little better. It's so restful to think that at midnight he'll be rounding Sandy Hook.

WOLFE:

M-m—that's what I came to talk about.

JULIE:

(*Alarmed.*)
What!

WOLFE:

It don't go so quick. These fellows—

JULIE:

You mean you can't get a passport! Oh!

WOLFE:

Well, now, hold on. I don't say I can't yet exactly. There seems to be some sort of monkey business going on. Maybe they got wind of something and don't want him to get away.

JULIE:

Oscar, another twenty-four hours with this caged lunatic and you can order strait jackets for two. He's impossible to live with—and those terrible people on the street! If you think I gave a rotten matinee just wait till you see the night show!

WOLFE:

Now, now, now! Did Oscar ever fail you? We'll get it all right—I hope. Anyhow, here's his money. That's that much.

FANNY:

How much?

JULIE:

What's the difference, Mother? He has to have it.
(*To Wolfe. Her hand on his arm.*)
Oscar, I owe you a ghastly lot of money, don't I? How much?

WOLFE:

The money you're welcome to, Julie. But it oughtn't to be that you got to come to me like this. You make as much money as any woman in the business. Forty-one weeks you've had in this show alone—ten per cent of the gross—over fifteen hundred a week you've averaged. What the devil do you do with all your money, anyhow!

JULIE:

Why—I don't know. What do you mean—do with it?

FANNY:

What does anybody do with it?

WOLFE:

Well, just for argument's sake, let me ask you once. Forty-one weeks, you've made sixty thousand since you opened in this play, and that says nothing about all the other ones. In the past twenty years I bet you you made a million dollars. Now how much of it have you actually got?

JULIE:

Let's see—where's my bag? I've got over three dollars in that, and Della owes me seventy-five cents—

(*Jo enters on balcony; starts to descend stairs.*)

—Oh, I don't know, Oscar. It just goes.

(*To Jo, who is crossing to the door.*)

Jo, tell Della caviar for Miss Gwen's dinner.

JO:

Yes, Miss Julie.

(*Goes.*)

JULIE:

(*To Wolfe and Fanny.*)

Perhaps that'll tempt her.

WOLFE:

Well—

(*Quick little gesture and a squeeze of Fanny's hand.*)

I stayed longer than I meant to.

(*Starts up to alcove.*)

I let you know the minute I see this fellow, huh?

JULIE:

(*Following him up a step or two.*)

You're a dear, Oscar. Would it interest you to know that you are adored by the most beautiful actress on the American stage?

WOLFE:

Nope!

JULIE:

My Galahad!

FANNY:

Good-by, Wolfe.

(*Wolfe goes.*)

JULIE:

(*The slam of the door.*)

Gwen! . . . Oh, I hope he gets that passport! I don't dare tell Tony there's any doubt of it—let's just hope he gets it—Gwen!

(*A second's vain pause for an answer.*)

She promised she'd come down.

FANNY:

I thought she'd get tired of moping in her room like Elsie Dinsmore.

JULIE:

Gwen, dear!

GWEN:

(*Heard upstairs.*)
Yes, Mother.

JULIE:

Aren't you coming down, dear? I wish you would.

GWEN:

(*Off.*)
Yes, Mother.

FANNY:

Who is this What's-his-name of hers, anyway? Doesn't seem to me like anything but an average young man.

JULIE:

They're all average young men, except to the girl who thinks they're wonderful.

FANNY:

Speaking of average, how's Mr. Gilbert Marshall? Have you seen him yet?

JULIE:

No.

FANNY:

Didn't he come to see the play?

JULIE:

You know he always hated the theater.

FANNY:

(*Meaningly.*)
Oh, yes.

JULIE:

I suppose when he telephoned yesterday, and they told him I was out, he just thought I didn't want to see him. Perhaps it's just as well. It's a long time ago, and he's probably bald, and fat, and talks about conferences.

(*Gwen appears on the balcony. She is in one of those chiffon and velvet negligees; there is something of the Ophelia about her appearance. She has been cooped up with her resolution for twenty-four hours, and it is beginning to wear her down.*)

GWEN:

(*Advancing to the rail.*)
Nobody else there, is there?

(*Gwen comes slowly, pensively down the stairs.*)

JULIE:

Only your aged relatives.

FANNY:

Speak for yourself.

(*Gwen has come down.*)

JULIE:

Do you want to sit here, dear? Or shall we go in by the fire?

GWEN:

(*Sits.*)
Oh, this is all right. . . .

(*Glances up with a rather wan smile.*)
I don't mean to act like a prima donna. I just feel like hell, that's all.

JULIE:

(*Standing over her.*)
I know you do, dear. I hate to see you unhappy like this.

(*Leans over, kisses the top of her head lightly.*)
But you have so little sense.

GWEN:

(*Her lips quivering. Very low.*)
He didn't even telephone. He might at least have telephoned.

FANNY:

How do you know he didn't? Tony had the receiver off most of the day.

JULIE:

(*Puts receiver back on hook.*)
Yes!

GWEN:

(*Eagerly.*)
Do you think so! He might have, mightn't he? Oh!
(*A little whimper of dismay. She even weeps, weakly.*)

JULIE:

(*Pats her shoulder tenderly.*)
Now, Gwen.

GWEN:

Oh, Mother, I love him so!

JULIE:

But that's nothing to cry about.
(*A hand on her shoulder, patting her into calm.*)
There!
(*A moment's pause while Gwen grows quieter.*)

FANNY:

You can love him and marry him too, can't you?

JULIE:

Of course you can marry him, Gwen, and live happy ever after.

FANNY:

Only, why you think you have to quit the stage to do it is more than I can figure out.

JULIE:

It's hard for us to realize that you wouldn't want to keep on, Gwen.

FANNY:

Your mother and I both got married. But we didn't drop more important things to do it.

GWEN:

There isn't anything more important.

FANNY:

Fiddlesticks! Marriage isn't a career—it's an incident. Aubrey Cavendish and I were married in the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe, in Bristol, England, just before the matinee. The wedding supper was served on the stage of the Theatre Royal between the matinee and the night performance—we played *She Stoops to Conquer* in the afternoon, and *A Scrap of Paper* was the night bill. They sent the supper in from the George and Lion next door, and very nice it was, too, but I remember they'd gone and put nutmeg in the gooseberry tarts, and Aubrey never could abide nutmeg. It must have been that that upset him, for he gave the only bad performance that night that I ever saw him give.

GWEN:

I know, Grandma. But that's got nothing to do with me. You married an actor and—

(*Turning to her mother, swiftly.*)

—so did you. You lived the same sort of lives. Don't you see that this is different!

JULIE:

Oh, I knew some rather nice men who weren't actors—didn't I, Fanny?

(*A gesture from Fanny of utter dismissal of this subject as being too vast and agonizing to go into.*)

There were lots of times when I thought that being a wife and mother was all that mattered in the world. And then, each time, I'd learn all over again that that wasn't enough for me.

FANNY:

I should say not.

JULIE:

Earthquakes, and cyclones, and fire and flood, and somehow you still give the show. I know it says in the contract that you stop for acts of God, but I can't remember that I ever did.

FANNY:

Nor I. Nor your grandfather. Nobody ever knew what a sick man Aubrey Cavendish was, those last months. But he played a full season of thirty-five weeks. Dropped dead on the stage of Macauley's in Louisville two minutes after the curtain fell on Saturday night, the week we closed. Not only that, but he waited to take four calls.

GWEN:

I know, I know.

(*Rises.*)

But—I'm not like that, that's all.

JULIE:

(*Rises.*)

You think you're not, but you are! Marry him if you love him, Gwen, but don't give up everything to do it! The day might come when you'd hate him for it.

GWEN:

Hate Perry!

(*A little bitter, scornful laugh.*)

You just don't know what you're talking about.

JULIE:

Gwen, do you think it's going to be any fun for me to have them see you step out—acting with me in my play, and for all I know, walking away with it! You'll be so fresh, and such a surprise! And it'll be your night. I'll be proud and happy of course.

(*A very little pause, and then, almost as though to convince herself.*)

. . . of course. They'll say, "That's her daughter." But ten years from now it'll be, "That's her mother."

GWEN:

I'll never be half the actress you are.

JULIE:

Gwen, if I could only make you realize that the thrill you get out of doing your work is bigger than any other single thing in the world!

(*A little gesture of protest from Gwen.*)

Oh, I know! There's love. But you can be the most fortunate person in the world, Gwen. You can have both. But for God's sake don't make the mistake of giving up one for the other.

FANNY:

No, child.

GWEN:

Work! Acting isn't anything. What's acting compared to—

FANNY:

It's everything! They'll tell you it isn't—your fancy friends—but

it's a lie! And they know it's a lie! They'd give their ears to be in your place! Don't make any mistake about that!

JULIE:

They'll say, "Come on and play," and you'll say, "I have to work," and they'll say, "Oh, work!" There'll be plenty of things that you'll have to give up—gay things and amusing things—

(*Della appears in the doorway, evidently meaning to get Julie's attention.*)

I've missed parties and dinners and rides and walks! All my life I've had to get up just before dessert was served and just when conversation was most entertaining!

FANNY:

What is it, Della?

DELLA:

How about dinner?

FANNY:

Don't bother us!

(*Della goes, puzzled.*)

(*Stealing Julie's thunder.*)

You've got to leave, and go down to a stuffy dressing room and smear paint on your face and go out on the stage and speak a lot of fool lines, and you love it! You couldn't live without it! Do you suppose I could have stood these two years, hobbling around with this thing—

(*Brandishing her cane.*)

—if I hadn't known I was going back to it!

JULIE:

Long as I've been on the stage there isn't a night when I stand in the wings waiting for my cue that I don't get that sick feeling at the pit of my stomach! And my hands are cold and my cheeks are hot, and you'd think I'd never seen a stage before!

FANNY:

Yes, yes! That's it!

(*Struggling to her feet in her excitement.*)

Every night when I'm sitting here alone I'm really down there at the theater! Seven-thirty, and they're going in at the stage door! Good evening to the doorman. Taking down their keys and looking in the mail rack. Eight o'clock! The stage hands are setting up.

(*Raps with her cane.*)

Half hour, Miss Cavendish! Grease paint, rouge, mascara! Fifteen minutes, Miss Cavendish! My costume! . . . More rouge! . . . Where's the rabbit's foot! . . . Overture! . . . How's the house tonight? . . . The curtain's up! . . . Props! . . . Cue! . . . Enter! . . . That's all that's kept me alive these two years. If you weren't down there for me, I wouldn't want to live. . . . I couldn't live. You . . . down there . . . for me . . . going on . . . going on . . . going on. . . .

(*The excitement and the strain are too much for her. Suddenly she goes limp, topples, crumples. Julie and Gwen, standing near her, catch her as she is about to fall, and place her in the chair from which she has risen. She is briefly unconscious.*)

JULIE:

Mother! Mother, what's the matter!

GWEN:

Grandma! Grandma!

JULIE:

Mother! Tony! Della! Quick!

GWEN:

(*At Fanny's side, frantic and remorseful.*)

It's all right, grandma. I'll do it. I will. I will! Grandma! I'll do it!

(*Julie rushes to the door, right. Calls, "Della! Jo!" Tony appears on the balcony, followed by McDermott.*)

TONY:

What's the matter! What is it!

(*Tony dashes down the stairs, followed by McDermott in a surprising descent.*)

JULIE:

She fainted! We were talking!

TONY:

Do something! For God's sake do something! What are you all standing around for! Where is everybody?

GWEN:

It's all my fault! Grandma! Grandma!

(*Jo and Della enter swiftly.*)

JULIE:

Get some water! Whiskey! Quick!

(*Jo exits hurriedly.*)

(*Exclamations, suggestions, broken speeches from the group. "She's coming round." "She's better." "There, Mother." "It's me, Mother. It's Julie." "Telephone the doctor!" "You're all right. You're all right, Mother." "You're all right now."*)

(*Jo returns carrying water and flask. "There, take that, Mother. Just a sip. You'll be fine in a minute. There. She's taking it. Moisten her forehead with it," etc.*)

TONY:

Mother! Mother! It's me—Tony!

(*The confused murmur of talk slowly dies. "There. We'll take her upstairs. You're all right now. There, there. Yes, it's all right, Mother dear."*)

GWEN:

I'm going to do it, grandma. I didn't mean it. I will! Of course I will!

JULIE:

Did you hear? It's all right! Everything's going to be all right!

TONY:

She's better now! Aren't you, Mother?

FANNY:

(*Struggles rather feebly to rise; to assert her independence. Her voice is little more than a whisper.*)
I'm all right. There's nothing the matter. But I think I'll go up and lie down.

(*They gather round to assist her.*)

TONY:

Shall I carry her?

JULIE:

Della, run ahead and turn the bed down. Jo, get a hot-water bag.

(*Jo and Della run up the stairs ahead of the others.*)

MCDERMOTT:

That's the stuff. Just lean on me. You're doing swell.

TONY:

Here we go! Now!

JULIE:

Careful, Tony. Slow.

(*They move cautiously up the stairway.*)

FANNY:

(*They are halfway up the stairs.*)
Wait a minute. . . . Wait. . . .

JULIE:

What is it! Mother, do you feel faint again!

FANNY:

I just want to rest a minute. . . . Just a minute. . . .

(*A long sigh.*)

No use. . . . No use fooling myself. . . . I'm through. . . . I'll never go back again. . . . It's finished.

JULIE:

Oh, Mother, what nonsense!

TONY:

(*Starting her on up the stairs again, gently.*)

You'll be as good as new tomorrow.

MCDERMOTT:

Sure you will.

(*Jo comes hurrying out the center door carrying a hot-water bag, goes swiftly into Fanny's room.*)

(*They are now at the head of the stairs.*)

JULIE:

Now, you're all right, Mother. Now, you go right to bed.

(*They stream into the bedroom, urging her on, reassuring her. Here we are! Now everything'll be fine. Take it easy! There! Now!*)

(*The door closes.*)

(*Gwen, during the latter part of this scene, has taken a few slow steps up the stairs, so that she is by now about halfway up. The moment of the door's closing finds her quite still on the stairs. She brings her hands together in a little gesture of desperation. You hear the impact of her closed fist against her palm. Stumbles on up, heavily. Exits.*)

(*There is a moment of silence. Jo bursts out the door of Fanny's room, bent on an errand. Between his opening and shutting of the door the sound of voices in Fanny's room comes up confused and high. A voice is heard above the others. Probably Julie's voice.*)

JULIE:

Spirits of ammonia. Bring the whole thing.

(*Jo goes hurriedly into Julie's room. A moment's pause. McDermott dashes out of Fanny's room; the voices come up as before. A moment's pause. Della comes out of Fanny's room, goes toward Julie's room. Jo enters from Julie's room, goes toward Fanny's room, carrying a heavy medicine case. As Della and Jo meet on the balcony the front doorbell rings. Jo, laden with the case, obviously cannot answer it. Della, after a second's hesitation, turns, goes toward stairway.*)

DELLA:

I'll go.

(*Descends stairs quickly. Jo goes on into Fanny's room. Della goes to outer door.*)

GILBERT MARSHALL:

(*Off.*)

Miss Cavendish in? Miss Julie Cavendish?

DELLA:

Yes, sir.

GIL:

Will you tell her—Mr. Gilbert Marshall?

(*Della reappears from the alcove, a little ahead of Gil.*)

DELLA:

Yes, sir, if you'll just—

(*Della comes quickly around to the stairs, starts to ascend, with a somewhat indefinite continuation of her speech.*)

I'll ask her if she can see you.

(*Goes up and into Fanny's room.*)

(*Gilbert Marshall is forty-seven, quiet, dominant, successful. He gives the effect of power and control. Hair slightly gray-*

ing. Very well dressed. He is in topcoat now as he stands surveying the empty room. His hat and stick in his hand.)
(As Della opens the door to enter Fanny's room, there comes from it a chorus of high-pitched voices. At the sound of what evidently is a scene upstairs, Marshall turns and surveys the balcony. There is something of recognition in his glance and manner as he hears this.)
(After a moment McDermott rushes hurriedly out center door, balcony. He is carrying a bottle of alcohol. He goes quickly into Fanny's room. Again the babel as the door opens and closes. Instantly it reopens and Jo comes out. He comes down the stairs. A glance of inquiry at Gil.)

GIL:

Is there something the matter? Is Miss Cavendish—?

JO:

It's Mrs. Cavendish, sir.

GIL:

Oh, I'm sorry.
(The sound of voices is heard again as Fanny's door is opened.)
Maybe I'd better not wait.

JO:

Oh, she's all right. Just a kind of fainting spell.

GIL:

I won't intrude now. Just say I'll telephone.

JO:

I'm sure Miss Julie'll be right down.

GIL:

(Doubtfully.)
Well—

JO:

Just be seated, sir.

(Jo exits.)

(Gil stands a moment, uncertainly. Then he picks up his gloves from the table where he has laid them, puts on his hat, starts toward outer door.)

(Julie comes out of Fanny's room, quickly. A small towel is pinned across the front of her gown. Her hair is somewhat disheveled. One sleeve is rolled up. She sees Gil about to depart.)

JULIE:

(Down the stairs, swiftly.)

Gil! Gil! Don't go!

GIL:

Julie!

(Comes quickly to foot of stairs.)

Can I help? What's wrong?

JULIE:

It's nothing. I'm—it's just—

(Begins to cry, suddenly. She covers her face with one end of the towel, helplessly.)

GIL:

Julie, dear!

(His hand on her shoulder, reassuringly.)

JULIE:

Oh, Gil!

(Clings to him, a refuge.)

GIL:

I'm so sorry. Is she very ill? I shouldn't have come, should I?

JULIE:

I'm so ashamed. I don't know why I— She's all right now. She's perfectly all right. It's been such a hellish day. Everything in the world that could happen— Gil, you're still sane, aren't you?—and solid, and reliable and sure!

GIL:

I hope so.

JULIE:

How nice! . . .

(*Suddenly aware of her appearance. Glances down at towel.*)

And I was going to be so ravishing on our first meeting. I had it all planned.

(*Unpins towel. Throws it aside.*)

Let me make another entrance, will you? I'll say, wistfully, "It's really you, Gil! After all these years!" and you'll say—

GIL:

(*One stride. Takes her hand.*)

I'll say—

(*Della appears on the balcony from Fanny's room. The sound of the door interrupts Gil. Both glance up quickly.*)

JULIE:

Do you want me, Della?

DELLA:

(*Comes swiftly down the stairs.*)

No, she's fine, Miss Julie. Mr. Tony's telling her stories about Hollywood to quiet her.

GIL:

Julie, I know I'm in the way. I—

JULIE:

Oh, please stay, Gil. This is the first peaceful moment I've had today.

GIL:

No wonder, with that mob downstairs.

JULIE:

You've seen the papers, of course.

DELLA:

Pardon me, Miss Julie, but it's twenty minutes after seven. I thought perhaps—

(*An apprehensive glance at Gil. Dinner is on Della's mind.*)

JULIE:

It's all right, Della. Never mind. I'll let you know.

DELLA:

Yes, ma'am.

(*Goes.*)

(*A moment's silence as the two are alone. They look at each other. Then they speak together.*)

GIL AND JULIE:

You haven't changed a bit.

(*A light laugh as they realize the absurdity of this.*)

GIL:

(*Draws up a chair near hers.*)

Do you know, Julie, I haven't gone to see you once in all these years.

JULIE:

I think I'd have felt it if you'd been out front. And you never were? Not once?

GIL:

No. I've only been in New York a few times since then. South America's a long way off. But I kept track of you. I took the New York *Times* and—the *Theatre Magazine,* is it?

JULIE:

You haven't been exactly hidden from the public gaze, Gil. What was it you found down there? Radium? Lying around in chunks?

GIL:

Oh, no, not radium. Platinum.

JULIE:

Anyhow, you've got millions and millions.

GIL:

I've done—pretty well. But say! You're certainly top of the heap in your line.

JULIE:

Oh, the zenith!

GIL:

And you have a daughter, haven't you? Seventeen.

JULIE:

That was last year's paper. Gwen's eighteen.

GIL:

I want so much to see her.

JULIE:

We're going to be in a play together for the first time. Think of it!

GIL:

That ought to be exciting.

JULIE:

It's been exciting enough. Gwen got a sudden, horrible idea that—

(*The telephone rings. Julie glances quickly toward door right, as though expecting Della to answer.*)

Sorry.

(*Goes to telephone.*)

Hello! . . . Yes. . . . Oh, Oscar! . . . Oh, dear! . . . Yes, I'm sure you did, but—oh, Oscar!

(*Tony comes onto the balcony from Fanny's room, carefully closing door behind him, his attention all on the telephone below.*)

Well, of course, if you can't there's no use. . . . There's nothing to be. . . . Yes, I know it is. I'm leaving right away. . . . Don't worry. I'll give a swell performance.

(*Hangs up.*)

TONY:

Was that Wolfe?

JULIE:

Oh, Tony! . . . How's mother? All right?

TONY:

Asleep. . . . Who was that on the phone? Wolfe, wasn't it?

JULIE:

Now, Tony, I don't want you to hit the ceiling—

TONY:

(*With a snarl.*)

He hasn't got it!

JULIE:

It's not so vital. You haven't done anything so terrible—

TONY:

You don't know what you're talking about! You'll find out if it's vital! Why, my God! If this woman—

JULIE:

Oh, don't be childish, Tony! What can she do to you! You talk like somebody in a melodrama! Now, calm down and shut up. . . . Gil, this is my brother, Tony. Tony—Mr. Gilbert Marshall.

TONY:

(*Through his teeth.*)
Charmed! . . .

(*Turns again to Julie.*)
What the hell kind of a jam do you think I'm in, anyway?

(*During the following speech he is down the stairs, up and down the room furiously, and up the stairs again.*)

What do you think I blew all the way from California for! The ride! I've got to get out of here, I tell you! Zaydak's in town by this time. Do you know what that means! You don't know that Polecat! Why I've seen her pick up a—

(*Snatches a fragile glass ash tray off the table, which he uses to accent his gestures as he goes on, forgetting meanwhile that he has it.*)

She's a killer! She'll do anything! She'd just as soon shoot as look at you! She's a Pole, she's cuckoo about me, and she knows I'm through with her! Now if you don't want to do anything to help me, why, all right!

(*Turns, starts up stairs.*)

You're a hell of a sister! I'm only your brother and why should you bother about me! But I'm telling you now if they get me I'll be all over the front page and so will you and so will Gwen, and the whole damned family! Now, if that's what you want, believe me, you're going to get it!

(On the balcony, discovers ornament still in his hand. A smothered exclamation of disgust at finding it. Smashes it to the floor.)

. . . Pleased to have met you, Mr. Gilson.

(He is gone.)

(A moment's pregnant pause. Gil stands looking up after the departed whirlwind. His gaze comes back to Julie.)

GIL:

Is he always like that?

JULIE:

Oh, no. That's the brighter side.

GIL:

But what is it he wants? What didn't you do for him?

JULIE:

He wants to sail tonight on the *Aquitania,* and we can't get a passport.

GIL:

A passport? And he's putting you through all this for a—well, no wonder you're upset.

JULIE:

This! What you've seen is practically the rest hour. We've had Gwen deciding to leave the stage forever—

GIL:

What!

JULIE:

—Mother having a little collapse, Uncle Herbert—you remember Uncle Herbert, don't you?—well, we won't go into that.

GIL:

Look here, Julie. When does Tony want to sail?

JULIE:

Midnight. The *Aquitania.*

(*Gil goes directly to the telephone, takes up the receiver.*)

Why?

GIL:

Bowling Green ten-five-one-six. . . . How soon can he get down there?—Tony, I mean.

JULIE:

To the boat? Why—right away, I guess, if he can slip by the reception committee.

GIL:

Tell him to get ready—no, wait a minute—Hello! John? . . . let me talk to Moran. . . .

JULIE:

Gil, do you mean you can get it? Oh, if you only could!

GIL:

Don't you know there isn't anything in the world that I wouldn't . . . hello! . . . Why, if I thought you needed me, Julie, I'd go to the ends of the . . . Hello! Moran? This is Marshall. . . . Now, get this. . . . I want an emergency passport *Aquitania* tonight. . . . That's right. . . . I want you to meet me on the Cunard dock in half an hour. . . .

(*To Julie.*)

Can he make it in half an hour?

JULIE:

(*Eagerly.*)

Yes, yes!

GIL:

(*In phone.*)
Now, no slip-up on this.

JULIE:

(*Sotto voce.*)
Twenty minutes.

GIL:

I'll give you the details when I see you. . . . Right.
(*Hangs up.*)

JULIE:

Oh, Gil!

GIL:

I'll meet Tony and smuggle him on board. Moran will do the rest.

JULIE:

Tony! Tony!
(*Turns to Marshall.*)
It's wonderful of you, Gil. Why, you're one of these strong, silent men, aren't you!
(*Tony appears.*)
Tony, we've got it! Hurry up! Get ready!

TONY:

What! You mean the passport!

JULIE:

Yes! Yes! Gil got it for you! He's going to meet you there and fix—

TONY:

(*Racing down the stairs.*)
Whee!

(*A leap.*)

That's the stuff!

(*Bounds over to Julie.*)

You're a swell sister!—Jo! Jo!

JULIE:

Now, Tony, you understand you're to go right down there. Gil will meet you on the dock. He'll have the passport.

(*Jo's head is seen in doorway.*)

JO:

Yes, sir?

TONY:

Jo, I'm going to leave in five minutes! You got everything ready?

JO:

Yes, sir. It will be.

TONY:

All right. Go to it.

(*Leaps for the stairs as Jo exits.*)
Sis, you're a grand kid! I knew I could count on you. Old reliable.

(*To Gil.*)

Much obliged, old fellow!

(*To Julie, in the same breath.*)

Who is he, anyway?

(*And off.*)

JULIE:

(*Groping uncertainly for a chair. Rather mockingly utters*

the trite phrase of the theater to cover her own shaken condition.)

Won't you—sit down?

(*Sits.*)

GIL:

Why do you stand for all this?

JULIE:

Oh, Tony doesn't mean anything. He's always like that.

GIL:

What do you mean! That you have this kind of thing all the time, and that you go ahead and put up with it!

JULIE:

Oh, sometimes families are. . . . It just happens today that blood is thicker than usual.

GIL:

But these other things that you were talking about. You oughtn't to allow them to do that! You're a successful actress. Head of your profession. You ought to be the one they're running around for. And look! Everybody dumping their troubles on you.

JULIE:

Oh, it isn't always like this.

GIL:

You know, Julie, the reason I went away was so that you could go ahead and be an actress. All that stuff about Cavendish, and the stage being your real life, and the only way you could be happy. Well, here you are. You've got everything you went after. And how about it? Are you happy?

JULIE:

Happy! I don't know.

GIL:

Of course you're not. Julie, I've stayed away all these years because I thought at least you were living the life you wanted most. And then I come back and find this. You ought to have everything in the world. You ought to have everything done for you—done for you by someone who loves you . . . and I do love you, Julie, still.

JULIE:

Oh, don't, Gil—don't say things that will make us both—

GIL:

Don't you know what you ought to be doing instead of this! The way you ought to be living! Why, you ought to be in a country house somewhere, with a garden around it, and trees. Julie, if you could see the place I've got in England. Wyckhamshire. An old stone house, and the river's right down here, and a rose garden that's famous. People come from miles around. It's a beautiful place, Julie; and there it stands, empty.

JULIE:

Oh, Gil!

GIL:

And I've got a villa at Como—with the lake!

(*A gesture.*)

—I don't know why I bought all these places—it must have been for you. Or we can go anyplace else you want—Cairo, St. Moritz—anywhere you say. Don't you know that's the way you ought to be living! Don't you? Don't you! Don't you!

JULIE:

I don't know! I don't know!

GIL:

Julie!

(*Takes her in his arms.*)

What fools we've been! What fools!

JULIE:

Gil—wait! Let me think a minute. Let me get my breath.

GIL:

You've had too long to think. It's settled.

(*Again he takes her in his arms.*)

JULIE:

(*As she gently frees herself.*)

No—please! I'm not quite sure what's happened. I can't think very clearly—

GIL:

I'll tell you what's happened. Something that should have happened twenty years ago. That's what's happened.

JULIE:

Well, perhaps if—maybe—Gil, you'd better go now. I think you'd better go. It's late.

GIL:

All right. . . . Must I?

JULIE:

Please.

GIL:

I—I can't take you to the theater?

JULIE:

No—please. I must get Tony away, and—I couldn't give a performance if—just a minute alone—

GIL:

(*Going up into alcove; getting hat and coat.*)
It'll only be for a few hours—this time.

JULIE:

You'll call for me at the theater?

GIL:

At eleven? Is that all right?

JULIE:

At eleven.

GIL:

I'll be waiting.

JULIE:

That'll be wonderful.

GIL:

Good-by.

JULIE:

(*Gayly.*)
Good-by!

(*Gil goes.*)

(*Julie stands a moment. A step toward him as he departs. Then a slow turn. A second's absolute silence.*)

(*Tony leaps out on balcony, clad in his B.V.D.s and a bathrobe of silk worn open and billowing away behind him.*)

TONY:

(*Very loud.*)
Jo! Jo! Where's that bastard!

JULIE:

Tony, be quiet! You'll wake mother!

TONY:

Well, God damn it, I've got to get out! Jo!
(*Della enters, carrying a covered cup of hot soup on a small tray.*)

JULIE:

Tony, will you shut up!

DELLA:

Miss Julie, you'll have to be going. You've just got to have something hot in your stomach. Now, you drink this soup.

TONY:

(*Simultaneous with Della's speech, above. Starting down the stairs, his robe ballooning behind him.*)
Della, where the hell is Jo!
(*Jo enters, followed by hallboy in uniform.*)
Jo, where the hell have you been! Come on! Bring that boy and come up here. I've got to get out!

JO:

(*Crossing on a little flat-footed dogtrot.*)
Yes, sir. On the job. Got it all fixed.

JULIE:

What time is it? . . . Good heavens! . . . I can't stop to eat, Della. . . . No, I can't! . . . Get my things. . . . I've got to run. . . . Look after mother, won't you? . . . Bring her some hot

soup. . . . Tony, what's all this hullabaloo! Oh, if you were only out of this! *What* I wouldn't give for a little peace and quiet!

TONY:

(*Toward stairs. Talks through last part of Julie's speech.*)

I'm not making any racket! You're making all the racket. Nobody'll be gladder than I am—

DELLA:

(*Has placed tray on table. Up to alcove for Julie's hat and coat.*)

You know very well you can't give a performance on an empty stomach. Go fainting in the wings, and then what! You wouldn't even have to sit down to it. You could swallow this cup of good hot broth.

(*As the three voices climax, speaking together, Fanny appears on the balcony, from her room. She wears a rich and handsome dark silk dressing gown, voluminous and enveloping.*)

(*Jo and the hallboy have gone up the stairs meanwhile and have disappeared.*)

FANNY:

Hush that clatter! Person can't get a wink!

JULIE:

(*Goes toward her.*)

Mother! What are you doing up!

TONY:

(*Leaps up stairs.*)

Hi there, Fanny! All right again!

(*Stops as he reaches her. Pats her shoulder.*)

DELLA:

Why, Mrs. Cavendish!

JULIE:

Go back into your room this minute, Fanny Cavendish! Go back to bed!

FANNY:

(*Starts down, assisted a step or two by Tony, who leaves her to Julie, who has come up part way.*)
(*Della, hat and coat in hand, has trotted over to foot of stairs to assist when Fanny shall have got that far.*)
What's going on here! What's the excitement!

TONY:

There you are! You're the comeback kid!

JULIE:

Mother, I wish you hadn't done this. I've got to go to the theater. . . . Gwen!

FANNY:

I know. I know. Run along.

JULIE:

I will not run along until you go back to bed. I want you to go back to bed.

FANNY:

But I want to see Tony go! I can't stay in bed with Tony going!

JULIE:

Tony, for heaven's sakes hurry up! How soon will you be ready?

TONY:

All set! I'll be gone in thirty seconds! . . . All aboard for Europe!

(*As he turns to go he passes Gwen coming in.*)

Hello, there!

(*Tony exits.*)

GWEN:

Mother, did you call me?

JULIE:

Oh—yes, Gwen. I want you to look after mother.

(*Gwen starts downstairs. Julie is descending with Fanny.*)

I'm terribly late. Mother, lean on me. Gwen, take her other arm.

FANNY:

I don't need any arms.

JULIE:

Yes, but you do, though. You oughtn't to be up at all. Now, Gwen's going to look after you—and Della, if you need me you're to telephone the box office, you understand, and ask for Mr. Freidman—*you* know. I'll come right home after the performance— No! Yes, I will! There!

(*She has settled Fanny in her chair.*)

Now, Della'll bring in your dinner, and Gwen'll get you anything you want, and—Gwen, what makes—you've been crying.

GWEN:

No, I haven't.

DELLA:

(*Still with Julie's hat and coat.*)

Miss Julie, it's quarter to eight. You know what the traffic is.

JULIE:

(*Has gone over to the table on which the soup stands. Starts to drink a mouthful of it during this speech.*)

Oh, I've got to go through that crowd downstairs again! . . . Whew! this is hot! . . . And how Tony's ever going to manage it.

(*Calls.*)

. . . Tony, are you ready!

TONY:

(*Voice from balcony.*)

Right!

JULIE:

I've got to know he's on that boat or I won't be able to play. . . . Mother, I want you to promise me to go back to bed the minute Tony's gone. Have your dinner in bed.

FANNY:

Don't you fuss about me.

JULIE:

But don't wait up for me, will you? Della, I can't take this. I'm not hungry. I haven't got time for it anyhow. . . .

(*Calls.*)

Tony! Are you coming! . . .

(*To Della.*)

Hat!

(*With a quick movement she seizes the hat from Della's hand and pulls it down on her head.*)

TONY:

(*Heard off.*)

All right! Go!

(*Out of the balcony entrance and down the steps sweeps the procession. It consists of Jo and Mac, laden with all the luggage that Tony arrived with on the preceding day. Then comes the hallboy, disguised in Tony's hat and coat—the upturned fur collar, the pulled-down slouch hat, just as Tony entered in the first act. His face is concealed almost entirely by the coat collar and the hat.*)

(*Julie and Gwen follow the group on up into the alcove, shouting their good-bys and last-minute instructions. Fanny rises, her arms out, as though expecting Tony to come to her before he goes out.*)

JULIE:

Here he is! Thank goodness! How he's going to do it I don't know. I ought to go down with him.

GWEN:

No, don't, Mother!

FANNY:

Good-by, Tony! Good-by, my boy!

JULIE:

Take care of your sinus. Keep out of Russia. . . . Why do you have to have golf clubs!

(*From this point the voices of Fanny, Julie and Gwen are heard simultaneously.*)

Don't start anything rough with anyone downstairs, for Heaven's sake! Jo, make him behave himself. Mac, I'm trusting you too. They're sure to know him in those clothes. Why do you have to go to Europe! Well, anyhow, good-by! Good-by!

GWEN:

Tony, take care of yourself. Send us a radio. Be sure! I think it's absurd to take all that stuff. He could buy it all over there. Good-by! Good-by!

FANNY:

Tony! Tony! What are they going to do to him! I wish somebody was going along. Wolfe ought to be here. Don't stay away long, Tony. Come and kiss me. Good-by, good-by. Aren't you going to say good-by!

(*The three figures have swept down the stairs, been joined*

by Della, have moved quickly across the room, and are now in the alcove on their way out. Julie, Fanny, and Gwen stand aghast as they realize that Tony is not stopping to say good-by.)

JULIE:

Tony, aren't you saying good-by to us? He isn't saying good-by.

GWEN:

Tony! Wait a minute! Say good-by to us all. Why, he isn't stopping! He's going! He's gone!

FANNY:

Tony, my boy! Don't let him go! Say good-by to me! He's never gone like that! Come back and say good-by! He didn't even talk to me! He didn't look at me! Tony! . . . Tony! . . . Tony!

(*Growing weaker.*)

JULIE:

(*Rushing back to her.*)

Now, Mother! He's all right! You wouldn't want him to stop! He'll send you a radio. Now, don't! You'll only make yourself sick!

GWEN:

Never mind, Grandma—it'll be all right. . . . I think it's a rotten shame.

JULIE:

(*Darting toward the alcove, then realizing that her mother needs her more.*)

Tony! Tony! . . . No, I guess I'd better not!

(*Runs back to her mother.*)

Mother, you're all right, aren't you? Don't worry. I've got to go to the theater!

(*Through the outer door Kitty and Dean enter, Kitty leading.*)

KITTY:

(*Off.*)
Why, the door's open.

DEAN:

(*As he and Kitty enter.*)
What was that? Tony?

GWEN:

Are you all right, Grandma?

JULIE:

Oh, good heavens! I wish I didn't have to go. Gwen, do you think she's all right?

DEAN:

What's the matter? Fanny sick?

KITTY:

Listen, Julie Cavendish! I've got something to say to you.

JULIE:

What? . . . Don't—
(*Tony, in hallboy's uniform, darts out onto the balcony. He does not pause, but skims the balcony and down the stairs.*)

TONY:

Hello, folks! Farewell appearance!

JULIE:

(*In a sort of squawk that dies in her throat.*)
Oh! . . . Oh! . . . Oh, for . . .

FANNY:

Tony!

GWEN:

Oh!

DEAN:

What *is* this?

KITTY:

What's he doing?

TONY:

(*Glances down at himself.*)
How do you like it? Good on me? Isn't it?

JULIE:

Tony! What are you going to do!

TONY:

Going to the boat, of course.

FANNY:

Like that!

TONY:

Sure! They'll make a dash for the taxi—the crowd will all swarm after them—give 'em a nice run up Fifth Avenue. Then I go down, cab at the door, ten minutes I'm on the dock. *Voilà!*

DEAN:

What's it all about?

FANNY:

Tony, my boy!

JULIE:

Oh, don't. . . . Oh! Tony!

TONY:

(*A swift leap across the room.*)
Good-by, everybody!
(*Takes Fanny's head in his two hands. Kisses her.*)
Good-by, Mother!

(*A pose.*)

The open sea! the salt spray!
The Arctic wind! . . . I'm on my way! . . .
Remember it's the Guaranty Trust.

(*He goes.*)

FANNY:

(*Rather feebly.*)
Tony! Tony!

(*Sits, weakly.*)

DEAN:

Why! What! . . . What!

JULIE:

(*Sinks into a chair.*)
Oooooh!

KITTY:

(*Comes to Julie; stands over her.*)
And now I want to ask you a question.

DEAN:

Kitty!

KITTY:

Did you offer me that part of your own accord, or did Bert put you up to it?

DEAN:

Oh!

JULIE:

(From the position into which she slumped in the chair Julie begins to uncoil. Her eye is baleful. She rises slowly. Her whole attitude is so sinister and desperate that Kitty shrinks back a little.)

No! No, it isn't possible! You! You come to me with your miserable little— Your part! Bert's. . . .

(A little high hysterical laugh.)

After all that I've . . . it's too . . . I can't . . .

GWEN:

Mother! Don't!

(Perry enters.)

Perry!

PERRY:

What's the matter! What's going on?

JULIE:

Well—what else! What else! Come on! What else! Perry! for God's sake take her out of this! Take her away before it's too late. Take her where she'll never hear "stage" again! Take her away! Take her away! Take her away!

FANNY:

Julie! Julie!

GWEN:

No! No! I won't do it! I'm not going to marry him!

JULIE:

(Pushes her hair back from her forehead with her open palm—a gesture of desperation.)

Not going to marry him! Not going to ma— You mean because we said to you—

(*A finger pointing to the spot where Julie, Gwen and Fanny have talked earlier.*)

GWEN:

I'm not going to marry him and spoil his life! I love him too much for that!

PERRY:

Gwen!

GWEN:

No, no!

JULIE:

Oh, no you won't! If you think I'm going to let you throw away your whole life! . . . And for what! . . . *This!* . . . So that nineteen years from now you can be standing here as I am, a mad woman in a family of maniacs! Money for this one, jobs for that, rehearsals and readings and *Graphics* and tickets for God knows where! I'm damned if you're going to! You're going to get out of it now! You're going to marry Perry Stewart—

GWEN:

No, no!

JULIE:

Oh, yes, you are! You're going to do what I didn't do. They told me I had to be a Cavendish.

(*A movement from her mother.*)

Oh, yes, you did!

(*Wheeling to Gwen again.*)

Well, you're not going to be one! You're going to marry him now—tonight—tomorrow. And I'm going to be there with you, and stand up beside you, and cry for happiness, and wish to God it was me!

(*Her voice suddenly low, thoughtful.*)

Of course. . . . Of course. . . . There isn't any reason why not. . . . I'm not dead yet. I've got some of my life left. And I'm going to live it to suit *me!* You've all had your turn. Who's crazy *now!* I can walk out of this place, and nobody can stop me. I can still have peace and serenity and beauty for the rest of my life. And I'm going to have it.

(*Exclamations from the others.*)

You don't believe it, h'm? I'll show you! I'm going to marry Gil Marshall and go to Egypt and Venice and Constantinople—and what do you know about that! As far as the stage is concerned—I make you a present of it. It's yours! I'm through with it! It doesn't exist! The whole silly business doesn't exist! From this time on I'm going to live life, and leave imitation behind me! I'm through! Cavendish! To hell with Cavendish! I'm never going to act again! I'm never going to set foot on another stage as long as I live! I'm never going inside a theater! I'm ne—

DELLA:

(*Rushing on.*)
Miss Julie! It's eight o'clock!

JULIE:

(*Grabs her coat. Rushes, in a panic, toward the outer door.*)
Oh, my God!

CURTAIN

ACT III

The scene is the same. The time, a year later. November. As always, flowers are everywhere. A small table is decked with a rich lace tea cloth. The doors to the library are open.

At the rise Della enters. She is carrying a laden tea tray—gleaming with cups and silver pitchers. She puts it down on the lace-covered table; starts to arrange the cups. Julie strolls casually out onto the balcony, from her room. She wears a costume slip of gold or silver, with only straps over the shoulder. Obviously a tea coat is presently to be slipped over this. She is polishing her nails with a buffer. She throws a careless glance toward Fanny's room; her gaze takes in the room below.

JULIE:

Oh, Della.

DELLA:

Yes, Miss Julie.

JULIE:

Let's have tea in the library. I think it'd be cosier.

DELLA:

All right.

(*Starts to pile up the cups again.*)

FANNY:

(*Her voice through the open door of her room.*)
What's that smells so good?

JULIE:

(*Sniffs.*)
Gingerbread, I guess, for tea.
(*Goes into her room. You get a glimpse of her slipping into her tea gown.*)
(*Jo enters, carrying a little stack of plates.*)

DELLA:

Library, Jo.

JO:

Oh! . . . How many there going to be?

DELLA:

Half a dozen, she said. Better count on twelve.
(*Jo puts his plates on the tray. Picks up the whole thing and starts for library. Julie re-enters on balcony, putting some last touches to the adjustment of her costume.*)

JULIE:

Jo, did you start a fire in the library?

JO:

Yes, Miss Julie. Nice bright one.
(*Into library.*)

DELLA:

I told him to build one soon's I heard Miss Gwen was bringing the baby over.

JULIE:

Coming down, Mother?

FANNY:

(*From her room.*)
Minute.

JULIE:

(*Descending.*)
Got on your plum silk?

FANNY:

Yes, *sir!*

DELLA:

(*Indicating a vase of roses.*)
I brought Mr. Marshall's roses out into this room. I thought you'd want 'em where he'd be sure to see them.

JULIE:

Oh! Yes.

DELLA:

Certainly been wonderful, him sending 'em to you every day, all the time he was gone.

JULIE:

Yes. Hasn't it?

DELLA:

Maybe now he's coming back again you can get him to stop them.

(*Jo comes back from the library.*)
Wonder what Mr. Marshall will say to Miss Gwen's baby. He knows about him, doesn't he?

JULIE:

I wrote him, Della—let's hope he approves.
(*Gathers up a few letters from the table.*)
You might shake up a few cocktails, Jo. Somebody'll want them.

JO:

Right.

(*He goes.*)

DELLA:

He'd better approve. I never saw a grander baby in all my life. Two months old, and you'd think he was twice that.

JULIE:

(*Absorbed in a letter. Absently.*)
You must tell that to Miss Gwen.

DELLA:

I bet he don't see babies like that down in South America. Anyhow, they're black, ain't they?

JULIE:

M-m— Well, maybe *café au lait.*

DELLA:

(*A moment's hesitation. Then, with determination to know.*)
Miss Julie, are you going to live down there in South America when you marry Mr. Marshall?

JULIE:

(*Looks up.*)
Mr. Marshall doesn't live there, Della.

DELLA:

Well, he's been there twice this year, and this last time about six months. That's living there, ain't it?

JULIE:

Oh, he won't be there as much, next year.
(*Again turns her attention to her mail.*)

DELLA:

You see, I'm only asking you on account—excuse me, Miss Julie, but I don't know if you're going to give up the apartment or what. You see, with Miss Gwen with her own place now, and you going to get married and go traveling—

JULIE:

(*Absently holding a letter in her hand.*)

Well, I wouldn't worry about that, Della. We may not give up the apartment after all.

DELLA:

But who's going to live in it? With Mrs. Cavendish going touring on the road—

JULIE:

I don't know about that, Della. The doctor doesn't think she ought to go on the road.

DELLA:

But she was telling me only five minutes ago—

JULIE:

Yes, yes, I know.

(*She speaks dispassionately, but she is picking her words with care.*)

But mother is not going to be able to travel again, Della.

DELLA:

What?

(*Julie turns slowly and looks at her. A meaningful gaze.*)

Oh, my God!

(*Instantly Fanny comes out onto the balcony. She wears the plum silk gown, very proud, and is in a particularly gay mood.*)

FANNY:

"And purple her habiliments and scarlet was her soul."

(*She leans over the balcony.*)

"Romeo, wherefore art thou, Romeo?"

(*Starts down the stairs.*)

Well, where's your young man? You'd think he'd come bounding right up from the dock after being away so long.

(*Della, in the light of the news she has just received, is hardly able to take her eyes from Fanny. She goes out slowly, looking back.*)

JULIE:

He'll be along presently. He phoned from the hotel.

FANNY:

Expect he's brought you another quart of emeralds. Got 'em piled up now like coal in a cellar.

JULIE:

Mother, I wish you were fonder of Gil.

FANNY:

I'm just as fond of him now as I ever was.

JULIE:

You don't understand Gil, Mother. He's different from us.

FANNY:

I understand him, all right. He's what they call steady-going. Regular habits. Look at those two dozen American beauties—

(*A gesture in their direction.*)

—that have been arriving every morning, like the milk.

JULIE:

I think it was very sweet of him to leave an order like that.

FANNY:

If there's one way to take the romance out of roses it's knowing that you're going to get them every day. We've been wading through rose petals ever since he went away. There was a whole week when you couldn't see the rug.

JULIE:

But the very qualities he's got are the ones I need. I've had enough of temperamental people.

FANNY:

I'll bet he's worked out your honeymoon by algebra. Arrive Constantinople January twelfth, arrive Cairo February twenty-fourth. He'll tell you that the next Sahara sunset is at 6:49, and it had better be. And while you're sitting on the hill at Fiesole he'll know to the minute when you'll be in Copenhagen.

JULIE:

Even that'll be restful. After twenty years of checking my own trunk.

FANNY:

If you wanted to marry him why didn't you do it a year ago? Yelled about it at the top of your lungs. Why didn't you marry him then?

JULIE:

You know why I didn't. There was Wolfe with the production all built—a new theater on his hands—and then Gwen dropping out of it. I had to agree to play the New York run. How did I know it was going to be a whole year!

FANNY:

Where are you going on your wedding trip? Made up your mind yet?

JULIE:

Why, I don't know. It'll depend on what Gil says, a good deal. I'm not keen about these faraway places.

FANNY:

Since when! Why, it's been Bagdad and Venice and the Vale of Kashmir every day of the past year! What's changed you all of a sudden!

JULIE:

Why, nothing. I love the sound of the names, but they are awfully far away.

FANNY:

If you're going to marry him at all you might as well see the world. You'll need it.

JULIE:

I just thought I'd like to be around in case you needed me—you or Gwen.

FANNY:

What for? Gwen certainly doesn't need you. Settled and through with the stage.

JULIE:

Yes . . . still . . .

FANNY:

And as for me, while you're drifting down the Nile I'll be playing Ogden, Utah, and doing pretty well. I sold out there in 1924.

JULIE:

Now, look here, Mother. I've been thinking it over—your going on this tour—and I'd ever so much rather you wouldn't go.

FANNY:

What!

JULIE:

You haven't been well. I wouldn't have any peace if I had to think of you galloping around those terrible towns—Tulsa, Albuquerque, Oklahoma City. I know I couldn't stand a tour like that.

FANNY:

I'm tougher than you are. When I quit it'll be for the same reason that Aubrey did. And no other.

JULIE:

Well, I don't think you ought to go. Besides, there's Gwen. She's awfully young. . . . I'd feel so much better if you were here to look after her.

FANNY:

What's the matter with her husband!

JULIE:

Besides, there's this place—Della was just asking if you were going to give it up—and then there's Bert—

FANNY:

And Kitty.

(*The doorbell rings.*)

JULIE:

You see, if you stay here, all comfortable, it'll mean I'll have some place to come back to when I'm in New York.

FANNY:

Oh! So as to make you comfortable I'm to give up my whole career!

JULIE:

No, no. It isn't me. It's you. You must admit it's a hard trip, and—

(*Jo enters; goes toward outer door.*)

FANNY:

(*Rising slowly.*)
This'll be your Emerald King, I imagine.

JULIE:

Oh . . . yes. . . .

FANNY:

I'll run in by the fire as soon as I've said hello to him.

JULIE:

Oh, no. Don't go.

DEAN:

(*His voice heard off as Jo opens the door.*)
Good afternoon!

JO:

Afternoon, Mr. Dean.

FANNY:

It's Bert.

JULIE:

Oh, mother!

(*Bert and Kitty enter from the alcove, followed by Jo. During the next few speeches Jo takes their coats and Dean's hat; hangs them in alcove closet. Kitty is dressed with some expensiveness—a fur coat. Dean, who has been quite gray and nearly bald in the preceding acts, displays, when he*

removes his hat, a fine and unexpected crop of coal-black hair.)

DEAN:

Ah! Here we are!

KITTY:

Isn't it a marvelous day?

FANNY:

Hello there, Bertie. Kitty.

JULIE:

(*Weakly.*)
Why, hello.

DEAN:

Just thought we'd drop in and see how you all were.

KITTY:

Mm, what a smart tea coat, Julie!

JULIE:

Do you like it?

KITTY:

Oh, yes. I think the color's a little trying.

DEAN:

Thanks, Jo.

(*As he helps him with his coat.*)
Marshall's boat get in? I see he's due.

JULIE:

Yes, it did. He'll be here very soon.

KITTY:

Oh, won't that be nice? We'll be here to greet him.

JULIE:

That's—lovely.

DEAN:

Queer fellow, Marshall. Always talking about the Panama Canal. . . . Well, Fanny, still determined to go out into the hinterland?

FANNY:

Why not?

DEAN:

No reason. Just be careful, that's all. You're not as young as you were, you know.

FANNY:

Who is?

KITTY:

Won't be many more chances for family gatherings, will there, Mother Cavendish?

(*A bitter look of resentment from Fanny.*)

You won't be keeping this great big place when the family breaks up.

FANNY:

I was not aware that the Cavendish family is breaking up.

(*As Jo goes out, Della enters with a tray of tea, hot water, and cake.*)

KITTY:

Well, after all, with you on the road, and Julie God knows where, and Gwen married—I don't see that you'll have any use

for it. You can't count on Tony. It looks as if he's going to stay in Europe forever.

DEAN:

(*Intercepting Della as she passes him with her laden tray, he gathers up a rich and crumbly piece of cake, which he negotiates with some difficulty through the following lines.*)

Just what are your plans, Fanny?

(*Pauses, cake in hand, ready for a bite.*)

How about all this stuff?

(*A huge bite.*)

What are you going to do with everything?

(*A gesture that indicates the room about him, but which does not disturb the precarious business in hand.*)

(*Della takes the tea into the library.*)

FANNY:

It'll all go to the storehouse, I suppose. And Aubrey there along with it. . . . But we're held together by something more than tables and chairs.

KITTY:

It occurred to me this morning—remember I was saying to you, Bert—that aside from Fanny on the road, it will be Bert and I who'll be carrying on the family tradition.

FANNY:

Thanks for including me, anyhow.

KITTY:

Has Bert told you what we're planning to do?

FANNY:

Why, no.

JULIE:

No.

DEAN:

(*As all eyes go to him.*)

Well, I was keeping it as a sort of surprise, but—ah—I have become more and more impressed, in recent months, with the opportunities offered by the so-called vaudeville field.

FANNY:

Vaudeville?

DEAN:

Why not? Why not? They don't want good plays any more—they proved that in the way they received *The Conqueror*. Finest play of my career, and what happened?

FANNY:

It closed.

DEAN:

Now, here comes this opportunity to reach a wide public, to create an audience for the finer things.

KITTY:

We're getting eighteen hundred dollars a week, together.

DEAN:

Ah—yes, and twenty weeks right in New York, and around it. They've got up a very neat little act for us. Amusing. Human. Now, here's the plot.

JULIE:

Oh, yes. Tell us.

FANNY:

I'm all of a twitter.

DEAN:

Well, I'm supposed to be a sort of bachelor chap—thirty-five or thereabouts—very rich, and have had an unhappy love affair that I tell the butler about.

KITTY:

Ever since then he's been a woman hater.

DEAN:

Yes. Then comes this letter from Australia. It seems that an old college friend has died out there, and it was his last wish that I should take care of his little girl—be her guardian.

JULIE:

The letter is delayed in transit, so that it happens to arrive just before the little girl herself.

DEAN:

You've read it!

JULIE:

Oh, no. No.

DEAN:

All events, presently there's a lot of noise outside—automobile horn, so on—the door opens, and instead of the little child they were expecting, there stands an exquisite young girl of eighteen.

FANNY:

Kitty.

(*She rises and starts for the library.*)

DEAN:

Hold on, Fanny—I'm not through.

(*Doorbell rings.*)

FANNY:

Oh, yes, you are. Besides, that's probably Marshall. Why don't you two come in here with me for a while?

(*Della enters from library. Goes toward front door.*)

DELLA:

Tea's all ready, Mrs. Cavendish.

FANNY:

Come on. Have some tea.

(*A step or two toward library door. A feeling of general movement of the group.*)

KITTY:

I come in with my little dog Rags, that my father gave me—

(*As she talks she is walking in what evidently is meant to be the way in which Bert's ward will walk. Toes in, and is pretty cute.*)

—and I'm sort of a pathetic figure.

FANNY:

You don't say!

WOLFE:

(*Heard as Della opens the door.*)

Well, Della! The whole family here?

JULIE:

(*At sound of his voice.*)

Oh, Oscar!

DEAN:

AH!

KITTY:

Well!

WOLFE:

(*Entering.*)
Yes! (*To Julie*) "Oh, Oscar!" Don't "Oscar" me, you renegade!
(*Della goes.*)
Hello, folks! Fanny, my girl!
(*Turns again to Julie.*)
A lot you care about Oscar. All you're thinking about is this Whozis. The boat gets in today, huh? It couldn't sink or anything?

JULIE:

Your own fault, Oscar. Why didn't you marry me?

WOLFE:

Say, it's bad enough to manage you. . . . Well, Fanny, how are you? Good as ever?

FANNY:

Certainly am. Come on—I want my tea.

WOLFE:

Don't you go back on me like these other loafers. With Julie a millionaire's bride, and Gwen a society matron, all I need is you should marry John D. Rockefeller and my season is over.

FANNY:

About time you had to concentrate on me. I want a brand-new play for next season, and none of your cold-storage tidbits.

WOLFE:

(*To Julie.*)
You hear that? There's a trouper for you!

JULIE:

Anyhow, Oscar, I was a good fellow when I had it.

DEAN:

And I'll come back to you, old fellow. This little flyer in vaudeville.

WOLFE:

Mm. . . . Oh, Fanny! I knew there was something. Can you open a week earlier, do you think? Toledo on the fourteenth—all right with you?

FANNY:

Full week in Toledo?

WOLFE:

Well, maybe we should split it with Columbus, huh? Toledo ain't so good this year.

FANNY:

(*With asperity.*)
I can play the full week.

(*She goes into the library.*)

KITTY:

(*Following her as all drift toward library doors.*)
So then comes this scene between guardy and I, where I perch on the arm of his chair.

(*Kitty and Bert enter the library. Wolfe is about to follow.*)

JULIE:

Oscar, wait a minute.

(*Lays a hand on Wolfe's arm.*)

WOLFE:

Huh?

(*Julie quietly closes the library doors.*)

What's going on?

JULIE:

I've got to talk to you.

(*She stands listening a brief moment to make sure that the others cannot hear.*)

WOLFE:

What's the matter?

JULIE:

It's about Fanny.

WOLFE:

Yeh? What's up?

JULIE:

(*Pause.*)

Oscar, she can't go on this tour.

WOLFE:

Why not?

JULIE:

I don't know how you're going to do it, but some way or other you've got to keep her from going. Without her knowing it.

WOLFE:

(*His keen gaze on her.*)

What are you trying to tell me, Julie?

JULIE:

I went to see Randall yesterday.

WOLFE:

Yes?

JULIE:

She's through, Oscar.

WOLFE:

(*Dully.*)
What!

JULIE:

She can't go on this tour. She can't do anything.

WOLFE:

What do you mean?

JULIE:

She's got to have absolute quiet and rest. The least strain or exertion, and she's likely to go—like that.

WOLFE:

He told you this? . . . Fanny?

JULIE:

She never can play again—anywhere. She may never even leave this house.

WOLFE:

Let me—let me realize this. Fanny Cavendish—in there—it's all over?

(*Julie nods.*)

I don't know why I'm so—after all, she's been sick now a long time, she ain't young any more—but she never seemed sick—always going on again—busy with plans—sweeping us all along—enough energy for six. It don't seem possible that—

(*Julie's warning hand halts Wolfe's speech. Fanny appears in the library doorway.*)

FANNY:

Della! Della! No more mind than a rabbit.

WOLFE:

(*Elaborately casual.*)

So I says to him, that's one way of looking at it. Everybody's got his own ideas—

JULIE:

Yes—uh—

FANNY:

Don't you two ever talk anything but business! . . . Della!

(*Della appears.*)

DELLA:

Yes, Mrs. Cavendish.

FANNY:

Where's that gingerbread?

DELLA:

We tried to cut it and it crumbled.

FANNY:

Bring it in anyhow.

(*Della goes.*)

Don't you two want your tea?

JULIE:

Right away, Mother.

FANNY:

Kitty's reached the love interest.

(*With a wicked elaboration of Kitty's manner she returns to the library, her walk mincing, her expression a simper.*)

JULIE:

(*Talking for Fanny's benefit as she goes quietly up to close the library doors.*)

Of course, Oscar, I think in a way you're right, but there's still another—

(*Closes door. Turns to Oscar.*)

What are we going to tell her, Oscar? How are we going to manage it?

WOLFE:

It's all right. First I tell her on account of booking troubles we can't open just yet—make it March, say, instead of January. Then, when March comes along, it's late in the season, the road ain't so good any more—maybe we ought to wait till next year. And I guarantee you, the way I do it, she won't suspect a thing.

JULIE:

Oscar, what a grand person you are.

WOLFE:

I wish I could really do something. Thirty-five years we been together. They don't make them like her any more. . . . I wish you could have seen her the first time I did, Julie. Her face. Young, and gay, and beautiful—but so much more than beautiful. And how she treated me that first meeting. Me—a beginner, a nobody. I went in there, I tried not to show how I was shaking. I came out, I could have been Sir Charles Wyndham.

JULIE:

Oscar, if I could only tell you what you've meant to all of us! But you wouldn't listen.

WOLFE:

And—you, Julie?

JULIE:

What?

WOLFE:

What about your plans, with this news? Still Egypt and India?

JULIE:

Oh, no. But—what am I going to do, Oscar? Gil's got his heart set on the ends of the earth—he hates New York; I don't dare go far away.

WOLFE:

Well, say. You tell him how things stand, what the situation is. After all, he can't be quite a—I mean, in the face of something like this, surely now—

JULIE:

Oscar, why don't you like Gil? I wish you did.

WOLFE:

Marshall? I like him all right. He ain't just my kind, but maybe I ain't his either.

JULIE:

Oscar, do you think if I asked him he'd be willing to take a house here in town for a while? Then I could look after her—be here if—anything happened.

WOLFE:

How could he say no—a time like this?

JULIE:

I'd feel so relieved.

WOLFE:

Only, what would you do with yourself all the time? New York —you've seen New York. Running a house—what's that for you? What are you going to do?

JULIE:

Why, I don't know. It's all so sudden—I hadn't thought about it yet.

WOLFE:

Well, then, say! You're living in New York anyhow; you haven't got anything to do; what's the difference if—

JULIE:

No, no! I'm through with it, Oscar. Through with it forever.

WOLFE:

So. You—Gwen—Fanny—that ends it, huh? And for you there's no excuse.

JULIE:

I'm going to be married, Oscar. That's a pretty good excuse.

WOLFE:

Tell me, what do you talk about when you're with this fellow? The theater he says he don't care much about. Imagine!

JULIE:

There are other things in the world beside the theater.

WOLFE:

Sure! But not for you.

JULIE:

I want to relax, and play around, and have some fun.

WOLFE:

Fun! Fun is work! It's work that's fun. You've had more fun in the last twenty years than any woman in America. And let me tell you, Julie, the theater is just beginning in this country. It used to be London—Paris—Berlin. Now it's New York. I tell you, a fine actress today—there's nothing she can't do. And the finest one of them all, that could do the biggest things of them all, she says she wants to have fun.

JULIE:

Oh, Oscar, there are lots of actresses, and so many good ones.

WOLFE:

Yes, good, but not for this play.

JULIE:

What play?

WOLFE:

Not even any of these smart young ones that are coming up. Gwen, maybe. A little young, but she could do this play. Only—

(*A gesture of hopelessness.*)

—she's gone too.

JULIE:

Oscar, what play? What are you talking about?

WOLFE:

Julie, I've never been one of these artistic producers—*you* know—The Theatre of the Future. Way back when I was a call

boy at Daly's Theatre for two dollars a week I made up my mind show business was a good place to make money in, and so I went into it, and I been in it forty years, and I haven't got a nickel. Mind you, I've done a few good plays too, but always I had an idea they would also make a few dollars. But this time it's different. I have got, I tell you, a play I am so crazy to produce it I don't care how much I lose on it.

JULIE:

Really, Oscar! What is it? Who wrote it!

WOLFE:

A new fellow you never heard of. Gunther his name is—a college professor out in Idaho. You wouldn't believe a college professor could know so much. He sits out there in that desert, mind you, and he writes this play and he doesn't know himself how good it is.

JULIE:

What's it about?

WOLFE:

That doesn't matter—it's how he does it. It's going to revolutionize the theater—bring in a whole new kind of playwriting. They've never seen anything like this! God, what a play!

JULIE:

Oscar! How exciting!

WOLFE:

Exciting, yes. If I can do it right. But how am I going to do it. You gone. Gwen gone.

JULIE:

You'll find someone. You're sure to.

WOLFE:

All right. Never mind. Go ahead and relax, when you could be making history. I do the play anyhow. Not so perfect maybe—but I do it. I do it because I want to be known as the man who produced this play.

JULIE:

But if it's as good as that it would run years and years, wouldn't it?

WOLFE:

No. A month—two months—I don't give it more than that. The first ones like this—they got to get used to them.

JULIE:

I couldn't, Oscar. I couldn't.

WOLFE:

All right. Get married and be a bazaar patroness. Mark my words, you'll come back again.

JULIE:

They don't always come back. Look at Gwen. And Tony. He's been away a year.

(*The sound of the opening of the outer door, and a gay call from Gwen.*)

GWEN:

(*Off.*)
Yoo-hoo!

JULIE:

Gwen!

(*Gwen and Perry enter.*)

GWEN:

Oh, how nice! Hello, there!

WOLFE:

Hello, children! And how's the mamma?

JULIE:

(*A line shot through the greetings.*)
Where's the baby?

PERRY:

Hello, everybody!
(*Attracted by the sound of Gwen's voice, Fanny, Dean and Kitty enter from library.*)
(*Dean pops a final bite of cake into his mouth. Dusts his hands briskly.*)

FANNY:

So it is . . . Hello, there . . . And Perry.

DEAN:

How are you! How are you!

KITTY:

Hello! Hardly ever see you people.

GWEN:

How are you, Grandma, dear? You look wonderful! . . . Hello, Kitty.
(*Perry, a little aloof from the others, nods his greeting, or conveys it with a little wave of the hand.*)

FANNY:

I'm fine. How's Aubrey?

KITTY:

Where is he? Where's the baby?

JULIE:

Don't tell me he isn't coming!

GWEN:

Oh, yes, Miss Peake's bringing him. She makes him rest two minutes before his bottle or three minutes after—I never can remember. We didn't wait. . . . Where's Gil? I thought he'd be here.

(Perry, still with an air of detachment from the group, is at the piano, leaning over it, his back partly turned to the others. He is glancing idly at the pages of a book, without seeming really to be interested in it.)

JULIE:

He'll be here soon.

GWEN:

Oh, fine!

WOLFE:

Soon enough he'll be here. All the way from South America he's got to come to ruin my business. And Perry here—he couldn't marry a nice girl from Park Avenue or someplace. It's got to be a Cavendish.

PERRY:

How's that?

(Emerges briefly from his book.)

WOLFE:

I say you couldn't have picked a good Junior League actress, huh? Instead of my Gwen.

PERRY:

Oh . . . uh . . . yeh.

GWEN:

Now, Perry!

JULIE:

The boy friend's a little upstage today, isn't he?

GWEN:

No, he isn't. Are you, Perry?

PERRY:

I didn't think I was. Gosh, I want to do whatever . . .
(*Slowly.*)
Why don't you tell them about it? See what they think.

JULIE:

Why, what's up?

FANNY:

What is it?

GWEN:

Well—it's me. Now, this is the way it is. The baby's two months old, and he's the darlingest baby that ever lived, but he doesn't do anything but sleep all the time, and according to Miss Peake's schedule you can only play with him about four minutes a day. Of course when he gets older it'll be different, but just now he doesn't need me at all. I'm in the way!

PERRY:

How can you be in the way!

GWEN:

I *am* in the way.

(*Turns to the others.*)

She glares whenever I pick him up. I thought there'd be all kinds of things to do for him, but there aren't. So here I am with absolutely nothing to do until he gets so he kind of knows me. And on top of that here's Perry going away on a business trip. He'll be gone about four weeks, anyway.

PERRY:

I may be back in three.

GWEN:

The whole thing's only five. . . . Now, this is what's happened. They've got this Hungarian play and they've offered me a simply marvelous part—

JULIE:

Who has?

GWEN:

The Theatre Guild.

FANNY:

Theatre Guild!

DEAN:

What? What?

GWEN:

It only means every other week, because they're going to alternate with Shaw's play.

FANNY:

You're going on again!

GWEN:

No! It's only for the subscription period, unless it turns out to be a great hit, and this can't.

KITTY:

Well!

(On Julie's face there is a look that is not altogether happy. There is something of shock in Gwen's news, and, for her, something of apprehension. Somehow, this makes Julie's leaving the stage a little less agreeable.)

WOLFE:

Hold on a minute. Let me understand this. You're going back to the stage. Is that it?

GWEN:

No! Nothing like that. It's only for these few weeks, and just because it's a marvelous part. She's a slavey in this Budapest household—the kind of thing I've always been crazy to play—apron and cotton stockings and my hair pulled back tight. . . . Oh, Perry, it would be such fun!

KITTY:

Well, that *is* news.

FANNY:

And about time!

DEAN:

Nice little organization—the Theatre Guild.

PERRY:

Gosh, Gwen! I don't mind a few weeks if it's going to make you as happy as that.

GWEN:

Oh, Perry!

(*Throws her arms about him. Kisses him.*)

Isn't he a darling!

KITTY:

It's really thrilling, to think of Gwen going back. Aren't you thrilled, Julie?

JULIE:

Why—I should say I am!

(*Goes to Gwen.*)

Gwen, darling, I'm very happy.

GWEN:

I'm as excited as if I'd never been on the stage before! My, it'll be funny to see my picture in the papers again. To tell the truth, I've sort of missed it.

FANNY:

How soon are you going to open?

GWEN:

About a month, I guess. We go into rehearsal next week.

DEAN:

That'll be a first night!

KITTY:

I should say so.

GWEN:

It's really a terrific part. She carries the whole play. I'm scared

pink, but of course if I can do it it'll put me where I can—it'll be dandy!

(*A little embarrassed laugh.*)
(*The outer doorbell rings.*)

JULIE:

Yes. Won't it!

WOLFE:

Five weeks, eh?

(*Thoughtfully.*)
That means you are through with it early in January.

GWEN:

(*Puzzled.*)
What?
(*Della enters; goes to answer door. Jo follows almost immediately, carrying tray of cocktail shaker and glasses.*)

DEAN:

Ah!

GWEN:

Perry, you do feel all right about it, don't you? Because if you don't, I just won't do it, that's all.

PERRY:

Why, of course you'll do it. What do a few weeks matter!
(*Dean strolls toward the cocktails. Jo, at his approach, begins to shake them, genially. He pours one for Dean.*)

DELLA:

(*At door, off.*)
Welcome back, Mr. Marshall.

GIL:

(*Also heard off.*)
Thank you, Della. How are you?

JULIE:

It's Gil.
(*Echoes of, "It's Gil." "Well, well!" "Ah!" "Fine!"*)
(*Gil enters from the alcove. He pauses a moment on the threshold. Seeing that others are present he contents himself with kissing Julie's hand. Then he greets the others.*)

GIL:

Julie, dear!

JULIE:

Gil!

GIL:

It's so good to see you—to be back.
(*There is a general handshaking—greeting—business of welcome, with, perhaps, two shaking his hands at the same time.*)

DEAN:

Hello, there, old fellow!

KITTY:

Welcome back, Mr. Marshall!

GWEN:

Hello, there! How brown you are!

GIL:

Think so? And how's the little mother?

PERRY:

Hello, Marshall. Glad to see you.

WOLFE:

Mr. Marshall.

GIL:

(*To Fanny.*)
How well you're looking.

FANNY:

Never was better. How are you, Gil?

GIL:

Fine, thanks. Well! It's nice to find you all gathered here like this. I'm going to assume it's all in my honor, too.

KITTY:

Indeed, yes!

DEAN:

Cocktail, Marshall?

GIL:

Uh—no, I don't believe I will. I'm used to a different kind of stuff, down there. I'm a little afraid of the New York brand.

FANNY:

I'll take one, Bertie.

(*Dean hands Fanny a cocktail.*)

JULIE:

How was the trip, Gil? How many knots an hour, and all that sort of thing?

GIL:

Oh, about as usual. Pretty hot when we started, but cooled off as we came up north.

DEAN:

How long does that trip take, anyhow? Three weeks, isn't it?

GIL:

Eighteen and a half days, as a rule, with fair weather. Let me see—yes, we made it in eighteen and a half days, this time.

GWEN:

Oh, what a trip! I'd be bored to death, wouldn't you?

(*To Julie.*)

JULIE:

Why—I don't know. No. The boat might be full of dashing young Brazilians, or one or two of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse. . . .

GIL:

As a matter of fact, there was a very representative crowd on board on this trip. Some of the biggest planters in South America. Zamaco. Manolo Berlanga.

FANNY:

Really?

GIL:

(*A sudden recollection.*)

Oh, here's something that'll interest you folks. There was a theatrical troupe on board. American. They'd been down in Buenos Aires trying to play in English. Ridiculous, of course! Poor devils! Didn't even have money enough to pay their passage. There they all were, on the dock. Of course we couldn't see them stranded.

So we got together enough to see them home. I guess I felt a little sentimental about them on account of you people.

JULIE:

Oh!

(*A second's rather terrible pause.*)

FANNY:

Really!

GIL:

Seems the manager had skipped out with the money—you know how those fellows are. You'd think they'd be downhearted, but they were carefree enough, once they got on the boat. I talked to some of them; turned out to be a very decent lot. Couple of them were married—uh—lived in Jersey some place—had—uh—

(*This speech of Gil's had been received with a mannerly but stony silence on the part of the Cavendish family.*)

FANNY:

(*To Julie and Gil.*)

I'll go in and finish my tea.

. . . Jo, some hot water. Put a log on the fire.

(*She goes into the library.*)

(*Dean and Kitty leave in Fanny's wake.*)

GWEN:

(*Rather breathlessly—an attempt to find something to say.*)

Is it true that it's winter in South America when it's summer in New York?

GIL:

Yes. The seasons are just the opposite from yours.

GWEN:

How funny! But, then, I suppose they think *we're* funny.

GIL:

No. You see, they travel a great deal—understand how it is.

GWEN:

Oh.

GIL:

Well! And so you've got a family now, h'm? How is she? Am I going to see her?

PERRY:

He's a boy.

GIL:

Well, that *was* a boner, wasn't it! Anyhow, I imagine you're the busy little wife and mother nowadays. No more of this theatrical business, h'm?

GWEN:

Well—

JULIE:

Gwen is going into a new play.

GIL:

A new play! Why, how old is your child!

GWEN:

Not old enough to miss me—is he, Perry? . . . Come on, let's have some tea.

(*Gwen and Perry escape into library.*)

WOLFE:

(*With great dignity.*)
I hope to see you again, Mr. Gilbert Marshall.

(Into library. The door closes part way as he draws it behind him on leaving.)

(Gil acknowledges this with a little formal nod. He waits for the library door to close partly. Turns eagerly to her.)

GIL:

Julie! Julie! How I've missed you!

(Goes to her.)

JULIE:

Gil! How could you!

GIL:

What!

JULIE:

How could you talk like that! Didn't you see how they— Oh, Gil!

GIL:

What do you mean! What did I do?

JULIE:

You— Oh, never mind. It doesn't matter.

GIL:

But, Julie, if you'd just tell me. What was it!

JULIE:

No. . . . Tell me about your . . . trip, Gil. Did you have a nice time?

GIL:

The trip didn't matter. It just meant reaching you.

JULIE:

Oh, that's so nice—I—

GIL:

You're looking just lovely, Julie. I've never seen you so beautiful. Kiss me, dear.

(*She turns a cheek to him, coldly. There is nothing else she can do.*)

It's been the longest six months of my life. When you finally wired that the end was in sight—that the play was actually closing—do you know what I did? I gave everybody on the place a holiday with double pay. It took them all next day to sober up enough to come back to work.

JULIE:

I'm very—honored.

GIL:

They're like a lot of children down there. It's a great country, Julie.

JULIE:

It must be.

GIL:

It's as different from the life up here as you can imagine. At Córdoba I was in bed every night at ten o'clock, for four months. Up at six, in the saddle eight hours a day.

JULIE:

Oh! Yes?

GIL:

You'll love it there, Julie. It's so beautiful—and peaceful—and big! And you'll meet real people. None of your . . . Solid! Sub-

stantial! The kind that make a country what it is. This man Zamaco who was on the boat. He's my nearest neighbor, you know. Has the next *estancia.*

JULIE:

Oh, yes. You told me.

GIL:

Yes, indeed. You'll see a lot of the Zamacos. He's a Spaniard of the highest type—very big cattle man. She was a Kansas City girl —Krantz—you know—daughter of Julius Krantz—packer.

JULIE:

Oh! Julius Krantz.

GIL:

Very fine woman, and most entertaining.

JULIE:

I'm sure.

GIL:

They're stopping at the Ritz. I thought we'd dine together Sunday night—the four of us—they're getting tickets for a concert someplace—she used to be a harpist, you know.

JULIE:

No, I didn't.

GIL:

Of course, it'll be wonderful for you down at Córdoba—having her only thirty miles from us. She'll be company for you while I'm off at the mines.

JULIE:

Mines?

GIL:

Though for that matter you'd be perfectly safe alone. There are fifteen house servants and most of them have been there for years. Old Sebastián, for example. Do you know what he'll do, if necessary? He'll sleep on the floor outside your door all night.

JULIE:

Oh, no—really, I'd rather he didn't. You see, I'd start getting sorry for him, and I'd give him one of my pillows, and then a blanket, and pretty soon I'd be out there and he'd be in the bed.

GIL:

(*A mirthless laugh.*)

But England's the place you'll love, Julie. The absolute quiet of it—you know English people—they never intrude. I don't see any of the county people except Hubert Randolph. He and Lady Randolph have the Wyckhamshire place—they drop around evenings, as a rule, or I go over there. Isn't a finer man in England, to my way of thinking. And very amusing. Anybody who says the English haven't got a sense of humor doesn't know Randolph. He'll stand there, sober as a judge—you won't think he's going to say a word—suddenly he'll get off something that'll make you laugh every time you think of it.

JULIE:

Such as what?

GIL:

Oh, I don't know. It isn't what he says, so much, as the way he says it. He's a great fellow. One thing I've found, Julie, is that for real people you've got to go to the men who've done something in the world, gone out and made names for themselves. I tell you—

(*The doorbell rings.*)

JULIE:

(*Relieved at the interruption.*)
Oh, that's the baby, I guess. Gwen! I guess this is the baby!

GIL:

Huh? Oh! Gwen's baby?

(*Jo goes to outer door.*)

JULIE:

(*Going toward library doors.*)
Where do you want him, you people? Here's the baby!

(*Wolfe and Gwen enter, the former with his arm about Gwen's shoulder. She is smiling up at him, he looking down at her. They have evidently been having a chummy conversation.*)

WOLFE:

(*On the entrance.*)
. . . and I know what I'm talking about.

JULIE:

Say, what are you two so chummy about?

WOLFE:

We two? We got our secrets.

(*To Gwen.*)

Ain't we?

GWEN:

Big, guilty ones.

WOLFE:

You bet we have! You go ahead—relax. We get along.

(*Jo has opened the outer door. There is heard a bedlam of barking—more than one dog, certainly. Sounds of voices—"Quiet there! Down! Shut up! What's the matter with you!"*)

JO:

(*A voice off.*)
Well, who'd of thought!—What!—

JULIE:

Good heavens! What's that! What is it!

(*There appears in the doorway alcove the tall, sinister figure of Gunga. He is an East Indian, wearing his native costume, with turban. In one hand he carries a cage in which there is a brilliant-hued bird as large as a parrot. On his shoulder is a monkey. He stands silent after his entrance. This figure is greeted with a little involuntary shriek of terror from Julie.*)
Oh! What's that!

GWEN:

Oh, look at him!

WOLFE:

Say, what in God's name! . . .

GIL:

What's going on?

(*Tony enters. Ahead of him, straining at the leash, are two huge police dogs. Tony wears a dashing topcoat of camel's hair, and a light felt hat with a brush or feather in it, of the sort one sees in the Austrian Tyrol. On his entrance he is admonishing the dogs.*)

TONY:

Here, here! Where're you going! Not so fast!

JULIE:

Tony! Tony!

WOLFE:

Tony! Is it you!

GWEN:

Why, Tony!

(*In the background, following close on Tony, are Jo and the hallboy. They are laden with luggage of surprising size, quantity and richness. The hallboy carries an artificial-sunlight machine, hooded.*)

TONY:

(*Casually.*)

Hello, Sis! How've you been? . . . Hi, Gwen. . . . Oscar. . . . Say, Jo, got any beefsteak?

(*Indicates the dogs.*)

JULIE:

Tony, where have you come from? Why didn't you let us know?

(*At the end of Tony's speech about the beefsteak there enter from the library Fanny, Kitty, Dean, Perry. Jo takes the dogs from Tony and goes off with them. Della comes running on.*)

(*There now follows a babel of greetings, exclamation. Tony kisses Julie, Fanny, Gwen. "Tony! For God's sake! . . . How did you get here! . . . Of all the surprises! . . . Why didn't you radio!"*)

TONY:

Hush, my pretties! Tell you all about it in a minute. All the fascinating facts.

(*Throws off his coat as he speaks. His hat sails through the air to the nearest hand that may catch it. Then he turns to the Indian servant.*)

Gunga!

GUNGA:

Waguha!

TONY:

Mem singha salah ronhamar. Pondero mulah giva. Salah singha ronhamar. Gahlef! Della, show him where to go, will you?

DELLA:

(*Awed.*)
Yes, sir.
(*Jo re-enters at right. Helps with the luggage. During the next few speeches Jo, Della, Gunga and the hallboy carry everything upstairs.*)

FANNY:

Is he going to stay in the house?

TONY:

Gunga? He saved my life over in India. Another minute and the tiger'd have had me.
(*A quick clutch at his throat by way of illustration.*)

JULIE:

Tony, what do you mean by doing a thing like this! Bursting in on us this way! Why didn't you let us know!

DEAN:

I should say so.

TONY:

I was afraid to let you know. That's why I came by way of Canada. I landed in Canada.

FANNY:

Canada!

JULIE:

Why?

TONY:

Because Albania and Schlesingen were going to declare war on each other. I knew if I got out she'd marry him and everything would be all right.

JULIE:

Who'd marry whom!

FANNY:

What's that?!

DEAN:

What's he talking about?

GWEN:

He's making it up!

TONY:

It's been in the papers! Natalia broke off her engagement with Rupert of Schlesingen. Then the Albanians—

JULIE:

Wait a minute!

GWEN:

Hold on!

WOLFE:

Natalia! Natalia!

FANNY:

Who's Natalia?

TONY:

(*Patiently.*)

Natalia's the Princess of Albania. She's a nice kid, but God! I didn't mean anything serious. That's the trouble with those princesses. Sheltered lives. Dance with 'em a couple of times and they want to elope with you. Of course, when she broke off with Rupert, and the Prime Minister sent for me—

JULIE:

Oh! I'm beginning to understand. You've started a European war.

TONY:

Oh, I don't think they'll fight. I'm gone. She'll get over it. . . . Anyhow, that isn't why I came around. Oscar, listen! I was cruising around the Bayerstrasse in Koenigsberg one night, and I happened to pass a little theater. Stuck away in a courtyard. There was a poster of this thing outside. I started to read it—I don't know, I got a hunch about it, and went in.

(*Gil and Perry find their interest in this narrative flagging They stand a little apart from the group, hands in pockets, thoughtful.*)

Well, say!

WOLFE:

Good, huh?

TONY:

Good? It's the God-damnedest play I ever saw in my life, and I bought it. You're to wire 'em three thousand dollars tomorrow. American money.

WOLFE:

You bought it.

FANNY:

What for?

JULIE:

Yes. What for?

TONY:

What for? I'm going to act in it, of course.

GWEN:

Really?

FANNY:

Well, that's fine.

DEAN:

I'm glad of that, Tony.

WOLFE:

You don't say.

(*He turns to see the effect of this revelation on Julie. She is mildly stunned.*)

JULIE:

Tony, you don't mean pictures? You're going back on the stage?

KITTY:

Of course.

(*To Tony.*)

Don't you?

TONY:

Do I? Wait till you see this play, Oscar. Reinhardt's going to do it in Berlin, and Pitoeff's got the French rights.

WOLFE:

Well, what's it all about? What's so wonderful?

TONY:

Look! I'll show you!

(*As this account gets under way Gil and Perry withdraw*

even a little farther from the group. Presently their eyes meet; there is a flash of understanding between them. In a moment they are deep in conversation. For the present, however, they are drowned by Tony's voice.)

If this doesn't bowl you over I'll go back to the Ganges.

(*He is pulling a pile of assorted papers out of his pocket. Quickly selects the one that he wants; lets the others drop to the ground.*)

Where the devil—oh, yes.

(*Spreads one of them out on the table. They all crowd around.*)

Now here's the scene plan. Of course you can't make anything out of this, but I'll show you how it works.

KITTY:

What's that there?

TONY:

In the first place they use this new, constructivist scenery—grouping the actors on different levels, and playing one scene up there and another one down here.

DEAN:

Oh, my God!

GWEN:

That new German stuff!

TONY:

You don't enter or exit in the ordinary sense—you just slide, or you're let down by wires. Schwenger, the fellow that does it in Koenigsberg, fainted six times the first night. When they want to show a different scene all they do is switch off the lights down here, switch them on up here. In goes this level, out goes that! It's got every trick of the motion pictures, plus another dimension. Now, here's the big kick. See that? Where my finger is?

DEAN:

Yes!

KITTY:

Yes!

(As they all crane their necks there is just an instant's complete silence. The voice of Gil, talking to Perry, comes up.)

GIL:

. . . but by shipping through the canal, of course, we cut our overhead 14 per cent.

TONY:

(As he picks up again, the voice of Gil is once more drowned. Gil, in another second, ends his talk with Perry; waits with some impatience for a chance to have a word with Julie.)

That swings the whole thing around—the audience becomes the actors and the actors become the audience.

JULIE:

Serve 'em right.

TONY:

I tell you it's a knockout. It's been running a year in this hole, mind you, and nobody ever heard of it. Then all of a sudden—you know the way those things are—I looked around one night and there was Hopkins in the second row. I knew what that meant, so I streaked it up the aisle, found Meyerhoff, and settled it then and there. Of course the great thing about this play is it takes two nights to do it.

FANNY:

Two nights!

DEAN:

Tony, my boy!

KITTY:

I never heard of such a thing!

WOLFE:

Only two?

GWEN:

You're cuckoo, Tony! Two nights!

TONY:

Now, wait a minute! You don't understand what this thing is. It's a modern version of the Passion play.

WOLFE:

(*Fearfully.*)
And you play—what?

TONY:

The lead, of course. It's pure blank verse, and the incidental music—listen.

(*He dashes to the piano, followed by the eager group. Seats himself.*)

There's a sacrificial motif runs right through—tear your heart out—

(*He strikes a single chord. Is about to proceed when Gil breaks in.*)

GIL:

Ah—Tony—Julie, before you start—

JULIE:

Huh? . . . Wait a minute, Tony . . . Yes, Gil?

(*Tony stops playing. They all pay polite but impatient attention.*)

GIL:

If you people don't mind—I'm awfully sorry—I've got to break away, Julie. . . . Glad you're back, Tony. But I've got about an hour's business.

JULIE:

Oh, must you go, Gil? I—

GIL:

Well, I'll be right back. Later, I thought, perhaps we could . . .

PERRY:

Gwen, I think I'll have to go too . . . seeing this fellow . . . you'll be home, huh?

GWEN:

Of course, Perry.

PERRY:

Well, then, I'll—

GIL:

Good-by, everybody. Good-by.

(*A chorus of heedless good-bys from the group.*)

GIL:

Good-by. . . . Oh, Julie. Where would you like to dine?

JULIE:

What? Oh, Gil, I don't think I'll go out to dinner tonight. I think I'd better—Tony here—if you don't mind—

GIL:

I understand. That's all right. I'll call for you at the theater at eleven.

(*Gil and Perry depart.*)

JULIE:

(*As he goes.*)
Oh . . . yes . . .
(*She stands apart from the rest; thoughtful, silent.*)

TONY:

(*Picking it up on high.*)
Now! Here's the way this thing goes.
(*He plays a few impressive chords.*)
Then, when he comes down from the mountain there's a stunning passage
(*He goes into something subdued and wistful.*)
(*He plays for a moment. Fanny, Dean, Kitty and Gwen are leaning over the piano. Wolfe stands a little apart from the others, but his head is turned toward Tony, and his attention is on him. Julie comes to Wolfe, puts a hand on his arm to attract his attention. Wolfe turns to Julie, slowly.*)

WOLFE:

(*Rather absently.*)
Huh?
(*Doorbell rings.*)

JULIE:

Why don't you let me read the play?

WOLFE:

What?

JULIE:

That play by your college professor. Why don't you let me read it?

WOLFE:

What do you mean, "read it"? What for?

JULIE:

Why, I just thought I'd like to, that's all. To sort of get an idea of the part.

WOLFE:

(*A hand briefly on her shoulder.*)
I send you up the manuscript this evening.
(*Della enters; goes to outer door.*)
(*The music ceases; there is a chorus of exclamation and admiration from the group.*)

GWEN:

Oh, that's thrilling!

FANNY:

Gives me goose flesh!

DEAN:

Very nice—very nice indeed!

KITTY:

Goes right through you!

TONY:

But the biggest kick of all comes in the fire-worship scene in the eighth act. They've got a religious procession there, lasts twelve minutes—
(*Strikes a chord or two. Sings "BOOM! Boom!"*)
and believe me it's pretty pagan! Oscar, if you can get by with that and not be padlocked—
(*Miss Peake, the nurse, enters with the baby in her arms. Della follows, admiring the baby.*)

JULIE:

It's the baby! Look! It's the baby!

(*The group breaks. They leave Tony and the piano and surround the baby. There is a good deal of clucking and kitzakitzing and those strange noises with which adults seek to divert the helpless infant. "Look at him! . . . Isn't he darling! . . . Tony, look! You've never seen him before. . . . Well, what do you think of him. . . . Here, let me take him. . . . He's going to cry . . . no, he isn't. . . . Is him frightened of all the big bad grown-up people, yes he is!"*)

FANNY:

Give him to me. Give him to me.

(*He is passed over to her.*)

Well! There you are!

KITTY:

He *is* cute!

TONY:

I think he's terrible.

FANNY:

(*Standing the baby in one arm. Indicates the portrait of Aubrey Cavendish on the wall.*)

Do you know who that is, young man! You were named for him, Aubrey Cavendish Stewart, and see that you live up to it. . . .

JULIE:

Mother, do you think you ought to hold him?

FANNY:

Now, now! I guess I can hold a baby!

TONY:

Here you are. Sit down.

(*A deep chair is quickly pulled around to meet her. The back of the chair is toward the audience.*)

KITTY:

Oooooooo! Who you staring at, oo big-eyes! Ooo great big-eyes sing!

GWEN:

Miss Peake, don't you want to take his coat off?

MISS PEAKE:

I think it's a bit chill in here, Mrs. Stewart.

KITTY:

Oh, he can't keep his coat on.

JULIE:

Let's take him in by the fire.

DELLA:

(*At tea table.*)

Another cocktail, Mr. Dean?

(*Dean takes cocktail. Della goes to Wolfe. He takes a cocktail.*)

GWEN:

We've got to take him in by the fire, people.

WOLFE:

(*Stooping to survey the baby, his hands on his knees.*)

Say, that young fellow is a Cavendish, all right! He can't deny that!

DEAN:

By Jove, Fanny! He does look like Aubrey!

KITTY:

Do you think he'll be an actor?

WOLFE:

Say, *he* shouldn't be an actor! Look at him!
(*A sudden thought. A snap of the fingers.*)
Here's an idea!

GWEN:

(*Who is fluffing the baby's hair a little after removing his hood.*)
Yes? What?

WOLFE:

Listen, show folks! I got a great new play I'm going to produce—

(*A side look at Julie.*)

—and in it they talk all the time about a baby. Why shouldn't we have a scene where the baby is carried on, and—

(*A gesture toward the baby.*)

GWEN:

You're crazy, Wolfey! Perry wouldn't hear of it.

JULIE:

Gwen, he'll have to start *some* time.

FANNY:

Certainly will!

DEAN:

(*Holding up his cocktail glass, and signalling the others to join him.*)

Here's to Aubrey Cavendish Stewart!

(*A chorus of assent from the others. A little rush for the cocktails.*)

ALL:

Yes! Yes! Aubrey!

TONY:

(*Gives a glass to Fanny.*)

Here you are, Fanny!

(*Holds aloft his glass.*)

To the kid!

FANNY:

(*The child in her arm. Takes the glass in her hand. Holds it aloft.*)

To Aubrey Cavendish!

GWEN:

Stewart!

FANNY:

That won't stop him! He's a Cavendish, and he's going to carry on. We always have, and we always will. When one drops out there's always another one to take his place.

(*A pause. She starts to repeat the last phrase, but in a different tone.*)

When one drops out, there's always another—

JULIE:

(*A hand on Fanny's arm.*)

Now, Mother—

FANNY:

(*Gathering herself together with a great effort . . . Raises her glass.*)

To the future greatest actor of his day! Aubrey Cavendish Second!

(*They all drink.*)

MISS PEAKE:

I really think, Mrs. Stewart—

GWEN:

(*Takes the child from Fanny.*)

Yes. All right, Miss Peake. Come on, everybody. He's got to go in where it's warm.

(*A general movement toward the library door. More clucking and hubbub over the child. "Look! He's laughing! . . . Here we go! . . . He knows what it's all about. . . . Can't fool this bimbo!"*)

TONY:

Wait till you hear the ballet music, you people! How's this piano?

JULIE:

Come on, Mother dear.

(*All except Fanny go into the library. The noise goes on from there, fainter of course, but still heard, very merry. Tony is playing some gay strains on library piano.*)

(*Fanny has remained in her chair. As the others have passed into the next room she has slowly and unobtrusively sunk back in the deep chair so that she is almost entirely lost to the audience. Now her hand, holding the glass with which she has drunk the toast, is seen groping rather aimlessly for the table at the side of the chair. The hand reaches, wavers, the glass drops from the fingers, the hand drops to the side. Della comes on carrying the gingerbread; crosses to library door. She speaks as she crosses, scarcely looking at the figure in the chair.*)

DELLA:

Isn't he the cute one, though?

(*Goes into the library.*)

(*There is a moment's pause. The voices from the next room come up, high and gay, and there is laughter, and chirping to the baby.*)

GWEN:

(*Voice from the library.*)
Where's Fanny?

JULIE:

Where's Mother? . . . Mother, come on in! See what he's doing now! Mother, where are you?

(*Appears in library doorway.*)

Mother, come on in! He just did the cutest . . .

(*Stops, startled, at something queer in the figure huddled in the chair. Comes quickly, fearfully, goes to the chair, one hand outstretched. Comes around in front of chair. Touches Fanny. Calls.*)

Gwen! Tony! Quick! Quick!

GWEN:

(*Rather gaily.*)
What? What is it?

JULIE:

Come! Quick! Oscar!

(*At the note in her voice they come, streaming in slowly, talking a little, perhaps, in a subdued tone, and rather apprehensive. At the look in Julie's face they are warned. Their faces take on a stricken look. Awed, fearful, they tiptoe toward the still form in the chair.*)

CURTAIN